HAN & LANDO GO TO JAIL: VISIT ORD VAXAL (PAGE 98)

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Dungeon

ISSUE #106 • JANUARY 2004

OFFICIAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ADVENTURES

WHAT IS THE BLACK EGG?

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"Warm within his gut, unperturbed by the weather, the encysted snake fed quietly on his blood, nourished its slowly-growing eggs, and thus prepared certain profound changes for his future."

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RPGA NETWORK

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Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon Magazine*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 2/29/04. Drop by www.rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:

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Issue 106

Zombies Everywhere

So, here's my first editorial (which I guess must make it actually an "art directorial" instead, but I'll leave that up to Erik to fix). Every issue, Erik, James, and I sit down and have a meeting where we talk about movies, music, girls, and make fun of the *Dragon* staff. At some point during the meeting, we remember that we're supposed to be coming up with the art order for the issue at hand. That's when the hard work begins. Each adventure is pulled apart and searched for the very best scenes. Then we sort out just how to portray these images, and decide which artists will be best suited to each adventure or article. Of course, this leads to differences of opinions, and there are arguments galore during these meetings. Usually Erik respectfully requests that all the orcs actually look like orcs, and then I'll accuse him of being a philistine and he calls me an iconoclast, and then I cry and hide a dead fish under his desk for him to discover later. James just hides in the corner and sobs, saying "how come you guys have to fight all the time?"

Petty disagreements aside, though, this issue has one thing we could all agree was damn cool: zombies! I've had an appreciation for zombies since I was young, and saw them in movies like *Night of the Comet* and *Return of the Living Dead*. The thing about zombies is that they are unlike other monsters. You can't reason with them, they never stop coming, and a good zombie movie (or adventure) has hordes of them to throw at the protagonists. It's all "Send more cops!" and "Brains! Brains!" Zombies don't ever seem to need much of a motive—they pretty much just wanna munch down on some brains and crawl back into the dirt to let all that gooey brainy goodness digest. You can shoot 'em up, hack 'em up, and beat them senseless, but they're already dead, so you are always at a distinct disadvantage. Zombies are creepy, and much harder to get rid of than their wussy brethren, the skeletons (I mean, come on, who's going to be afraid of a walking pile of dirty bones... I mean those guys get hacked to pieces by Sinbad in a few strokes). There's no doubt about it, zombies are scary.

When I read the text of *Tammeraut's Fate*, I was struck by what a good horror movie that adventure would make. A lonely island, with no way off, creepy blue rot-infected hermits, and then, after night falls, *zombies!* Immediately we decided that Peter Bergting would be our choice for the art chores on this adventure, his dark and mysterious style befitting the feel of the adventure, and echoing the set design of old Hammer horror flicks. Peter sent in a bunch of sketches of the bloated water-logged Drowned Ones, with their fat fingers and puffed out eyes to the disgust and delight of the staff. We knew this adventure was going to be great!

Now that we're putting the issue to bed (that's magazine speak for scrambling madly to meet our deadline), I'm itching to go toe to toe with some of these soggy buggers. So, I'm going to go polish up my sword, check my torches, and pack myself a mess of arrows, 'cause these suckers aren't going to go down without a fight.

Sean

Sean Glenn
sean.glenn@paizo.com

PETER BERGTING

Dungeon
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Falcon Fan

I loved *Polyhedron* #162. I'm glad that someone finally designed a decent deck plan for the *Millennium Falcon*. I have one question, though; where's the galley?

I'd like to see more deck plans in the future, especially ships from the movies, books, and comics. I'd also like to see deck plans from YT series variants, if possible, including designs showing the cockpit in different locations, such as between the mandibles or on the opposite side of the ship. I've seen designs like this before in other publications and most of them are very good. They would provide a ship that is similar to the *Falcon*, but still different.

Shawn Sparks
Chubbuck, Idaho

We dropped ace cartographer Christopher West a line to see what he was thinking about the Falcon's *galley.*

"The Falcon *has very little in the way of dining amenities. Crew provisions are generally kept wherever Han Solo can find the room for them, but a small food preparation area is located in the corner directly behind the lounge seat in the main hold (area 7). This shelf is conveniently situated within arm's reach of Solo's bunk space, though it's really little more than an untidy assortment of beverage containers, utensils, and warming devices. Meals aboard the* Millennium Falcon *are an informal affair, to say the least; the Dejarik gameboard doubles as a small dining table.*

"Among the stock YT-1300 designs, the YT-1300p has a much more comfortable outfit, with a full-sized table and autochef device in the passenger lounge. A brand-new YT-1300f, on the other hand, comes equipped with no meal preparation facilities at all. One of the first things most owners add to the freight model to make it more comfortable is a fold-down table...usually in the main hold."

Well, there you have it. Also, while we probably won't be returning to the YT-1300 in the near future, other ships from the movies will be showing up shortly.

Digital Maps

Morning all. Hate to complain, but your web site... how can I put this nicely... sucks. A lot. If you already get the mags (in my case *Dragon* and *Dungeon*) there is little or no reason to come here. The old site had maps from the issues that could be downloaded, one of the best things in history. All you had to do was print them out oversized, cut out covers to hide various parts till players wandered into visual range, and presto! Instant battlemats for your DMing ease. I decided to print off a set so I could kill off a bunch of characters in the Lich-Queen's palace (they are actually begging to go; that's why I'm guessing they haven't read it yet) and the maps are gone! Please bring them back. It made my life, and the lives of several others I know, that much easier. One set of maps for one adventure just doesn't cut it.

Ben Mathis
Via Email

Look for improvements to our Web site in the relatively near future. We're still weighing our official policy on providing online versions of maps to readers, and may develop such content as "subscriber only," if we can figure out how to make it work. Thanks for the suggestion.

Culture War

I'm writing because I take strong exception to Gary Ma's letter in issue 103 regarding the lack of non-heterosexual content in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

First of all, D&D is a game, and games are meant as a distraction and escape from daily headlines and rigors of real life. I do not want to pick up a *Dungeon* magazine and see an adventure based on a split in the church of Pelor regarding homosexual priests. Nor do I want to see articles about 12-step groups, the effects of divorce on children, or humanoids based on Israeli or Palestinian nationals. Asking D&D to support gay lifestyles is like asking Monopoly to include a token of a man in drag or Trivial Pursuit to include an all homosexual category. I can't recall any Playstation or Xbox game with a homosexual theme. There are plenty of magazines, shows, movies and other outlets to justify and validate homosexual behavior. Please leave my favorite game out of the culture war.

Greg Kammer
Springfield, VA

For our part, we think the church of Pelor can use all the clerics it can get.

Joiiiiiin Usssssss...

I really enjoyed the November editorial about your first experience with *Dungeon*. It reminded me of my first experience, back when I was about 10 years old. I'd started playing D&D with my dad's friends, and he got me a subscription to the magazine so I could start playing with my friends.

Since then, I've been a fanatical

Correction!

On page 93 of *Dungeon* #104, we said SVGames.com has "the official license to distribute TSR and Wizards of the Coast out-of-print products." RPGNow.com also has a license to distribute such products, and should have been mentioned in the same context. *Dungeon* regrets the omission.

reader of *Dungeon*, even when I'm unable to play. I was inspired by your story about how you grew up reading the magazine and now work as the editor. As a sophomore in college, I'm trying to figure out what I want to do with the rest of my life. If I aspired to work on the *Dungeon* staff someday, would you have any recommendations as to what I should get involved with in college? What kind of experience will be useful to me later on? What career path led you to where you are now?

I am a subscriber, but I strongly agree with the assertion that counter top customers deserve the same quality magazine as the rest of us (my local game store went under recently, emphasizing the importance of retail sales to me). What I do not understand is why everyone cannot receive the "additional" adventure, rather than giving everyone less? Wouldn't a third adventure with the same cover price help the magazine move better? I'm not trying to complain and I'm sure there is a reasonable explanation, but from where I'm sitting it's hard to figure out what it is.

Nate Johnson
Via Email

The old subscriber section ran 16 pages, and since we put it to rest, we've added the same number of pages to the magazine everyone gets. So, in a sense, no one has really lost anything. The exact size of each issue is largely a function of advertising and production, but for now 116 pages seems to be the sweet spot.

While there's no "one true path" to working in the RPG industry (and on this magazine in particular), you'll want to focus strongly on English and creative writing courses. Some colleges offer specific classes on editing, which you'll also want to study. In the end, though, your experience with the material and passion for the game are the most important factors. Developing the skills to meet deadlines and produce high-quality work in frighteningly short periods of time will also help.

It's been said before, but writing for the magazines is the very best way to get into the RPG industry, and if you're hoping to work on an RPG magazine, that advice is even more appropriate.

More Dungeon!

Short and sweet. More *Dungeon*, less *Polyhedron*. I remember the old days when you could get 3 or 4 well-crafted adventures in the mag. That's not to say the ones now aren't well-crafted. Just the opposite: I think they're great! I'm just hoping more people are requesting the same. Length (of the adventures) is not an issue. Long. Short. Doesn't matter to me.

Also, it seems to me that there are predominantly more dungeon crawls. I know the mag is named "Dungeon," but I personally like an even mix of dungeon/wilderness/city/planar/etc. It's nice to see every now and again an adventure or two that have nothing to do with a dungeon.

By the way, *I loved Warduke! Yeah!*

William Bryan
Portland, OR

Lots of readers would like to see more adventures in our pages, so it's definitely something we've heard and will be responding to.

Our staff confesses to a preference for dungeon crawls over, say, mysteries, but rest assured that Dungeon *remains committed to providing a wide variety of adventure types. This issue's "Tammeraut's Fate" includes some underwater encounters, and we'll remain on the lookout for unusual locales and plots, including some no one's seen before.*

More Poly!

I'd like two put in my two cents here.

I like both *Dungeon* and *Polyhedron*, but I don't get the magazine for *Dungeon*. I read *Polyhedron*. I love the Mini-Games most of all. Great stuff. I like seeing new ideas that stretch or even break the boundaries of the traditional RPG.

The adventures in *Dungeon* are great...some of the best I've read. But there are more pure D&D fantasy adventures than I know what to do with already. I know I'm in the minority here. I have to twist my players' arms to get them to consider playing anything that's not D&D or *Star Wars*.

Anyway, here is what I would like to see in the future. More Mini-Games. I *love* them. What you guys did with *Spelljammer* (*Dungeon* #92) was brilliant. *Thunderball Rally* (*Dungeon* #93) is the kind of game you and the guys hang out and play for laughs till the beer runs out. I even liked *Hijinx* (*Dungeon* #99) to some degree. With just a little tweaking, I could have a truly funny and downright bizarre game. But my favorite thus far is *Iron Lords of Jupiter* (*Dungeon* #101). That kind of Flash Gordon thing really appealed to me as a kid, and now I get to play in that kind of world as an adult.

Patrick Lene
Via Email

Thanks for the kind words on the Mini-Games, Patrick. We've got an exciting line-up of fresh games for 2004, including two "returns" to popular campaign settings of the past and a "hellacious" fantasy-based game Dungeon *readers will be sure to love.*

Where's the d20?

I just picked up issue #104, which says it includes 14 d20 products on page 92...but when you flip to page 92

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Submissions: Interested in writing for the magazine? Download our submission guidelines by visiting the *Dungeon* homepage at www.paizo.com/dungeon.

you get "PDF: The Future of RPGs?" I just started purchasing this magazine because after having perused a few issues I discovered how completely awesome this publication is. However, I am very disappointed when articles are listed as being included and have their page numbers listed incorrectly or aren't even present, especially when they are listed on the *front page*. I hope you will correct this in the near future...possibly as a correction.

Francis Jones
Via Email

The "14 d20 Products for $10" touted on #104's cover was a reference to the Polyhedron*-exclusive "E-Publishing Promo Pack" offer on page 95. We referred to the beginning of the e-publishing article instead of to the sidebar itself, which in retrospect seems kind of dumb. Sorry about that!*

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Some Stuff I Like

As a dedicated gamer who doesn't get to play often enough, I find *Dungeon* to be a perfect means for me to stay in contact with and contribute to the game I love. That is why I send in adventure proposals every single time a new idea pops into my head (and for this, I am deeply sorry). But here's something that will take less time to slosh through than an adventure; some good old feedback. In the immortal words of Brak, "Here's some stuff that I like."

Firstly, the Adventure Path is truly a treasure. Never before, not from any purchased adventure or product, have I seen an adventure so well thought-out, intriguing, and detailed. I am definitely saving this for future gaming groups; if it means me DMing the thing over and over, so be it, as long as the players get a chance to experience this masterpiece.

Secondly, I would like to vote a "yes!" on your November issue's question regarding solo adventures. I am willing to try anything once, and I think this idea has great potential for the magazine. Reading an adventure, plotting and planning, scheming and just generally being a DM are all well and good, but there's something to be said for the occasional instant gratification. If there's one advantage *Dragon* has over *Dungeon*, I'd say that it is that I can crack open *Dragon* and enjoy what I read when I read it. Again, I don't play as often as I'd like, so usually it's a long time between me receiving a *Dungeon* adventure and me getting to run it. With a solo adventure, I would be able to play right out of the packet. I say go for it!

Timm Woods
Via Email

Go to Entry 42...

I just wanted to drop a line and tell you guys that *Dungeon* just keeps on getting better and better. The adventures in issue 105 were great. I thought "The Stink" (*Dungeon* #105) was exceptionally interesting. I mean, locathahs aren't used every day and to see them seriously placed in an adventure was very refreshing. Also, the artwork for that issue was just, well, great!

Now, on to one request. In a past issue someone asked if you guys would do a solo adventure. I think it would be great to see how the professionals at *Dungeon* do it. I mean, writing a true solo adventure (not a side quest) is just a totally different creature from a "normal" adventure and I for one would love to see an example.

Keep the great work.

David Fadler
Via Email

The general concensus seems to be that people want to see solo adventures here in Dungeon. Now the fun begins—we get to figure out how to do them and what they should look like. Any aspiring writers out there care to send us a proposal?

Good Times in Cauldron

Thank you very much for the Adventure Path: Shackled City series—it has formed the basis of a highly rewarding home campaign and I enjoy each episode as it is released.

You have asked for feedback on the Quick-Reference format, so I'm going to use this opportunity to share my observations. Plus I'll add a few comments on "Zenith Trajectory" (*Dungeon* #102) as well.

I have a mixed review on the Quick-Reference format. I find it very useful and handy as a DM—it is fairly user-friendly, allowing me to find important and relevant information quickly.

My major concern with the format is the amount of real-estate required for it. It takes a lot of space, which must in turn limit the size and scope of modules using it. My key issue with "Zenith Trajectory" relates to this. "Zenith Trajectory" is, in my opinion, the least rich module in the Cauldron series in terms of backstory and NPC development. I wondered if the amount of space required for the format reduced the copy available for the module and the depth of its story.

My other concern with the format is more of a layout/design challenge.

The Quick-Reference block dangles awkwardly on the page, not clearly identified, and often separating text within a module. I would suggest containing the Quick-Reference material within a colored box (of a different color from that used for boxed text) or other design device to help the visual flow of the module, and to provide additional visual navigation support to the DM when running the module.

One last comment about "Zenith Trajectory." It seemed out of place with the rest of the series. The limited expansion to the world of Cauldron introduced in "Zenith Trajectory" felt inconsistent with the world developed in the fabulous first two modules, "Life's Bazaar" and "Flood Season."

Aside from this perceived inconsistency, "Zenith Trajectory" is a wonderfully devious and exciting module. It just doesn't feel like a Cauldron module.

Thanks again, *Dungeon*, for this awesome series. I look forward to the next episode.

Jim Rea
Via Email

For Any Setting

Just when my *Wheel of Time* campaign needed a pick-me-up, *Dungeon* came through.

I appreciate the fact nearly all *Dungeon* adventures are set in the D&D universe, but there is a need to offer the occasional adventure that can slip into another setting. "Cry Wolf," by Nicolas Logue, (*Dungeon* #102) was a solid example of such an adventure.

The nature of the town and wilderness encounters, the personalities of the NPCs Samuel Arnault and Farmer John, fit perfectly into the *Wheel of Time*. The classes adapted easily enough, with Grogan switching from fighter to armsman, Valorin from ranger to woodsman, Gorik from bard to gleeman, Tor from sorcerer to male channeler, and Tamris from half-elf ranger to wolfbrother.

For pure gaming pleasure, the hide 'n' seek hunt in the bazaar and the snares and traps in the poacher's paradise were both refreshing challenges. And, of course, the party's wanderer was quick to snatch up Meg's quick-draw crossbow harness. (I can't wait to tell her she'll have to get the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat to use it!)

As long as you keep the "any setting" type adventures in this mix, *Dungeon* will remain a vital resource in this DM's library.

Troy E. Taylor
Granville, IL

We're committed to providing adventures useful in a wide variety of campaigns, whether they're nominally set in the Forgotten Realms, the World of Greyhawk, or in "any setting." Sometimes, it's fun to explore a circumstance or story hook from an established campaign setting, but in the main Dungeon *adventures are about the adventures themselves, not about obscure campaign setting information thrown into their set-up to make them interesting. We're looking for great encounters, thrilling NPCs, and memorable locales, whether they're within spitting distance of Waterdeep or not.*

Party of One

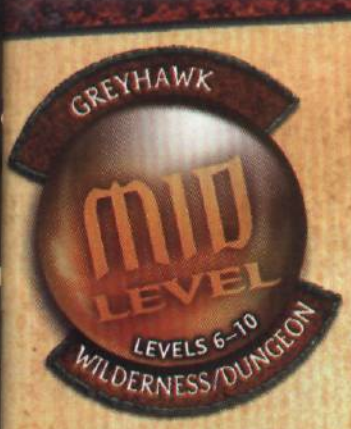
I play D&D with two distinct groups. One I DM every 2 weeks; this is a very casual group who pays more attention to the pizza and beer than to the actual game. I absolutely enjoy this gathering, and D&D is the reason we get together. The second group is one in which I and another fairly serious gamer get together and DM each other. We both take turns having our characters' story-line developed, and usually each of us DMs for a series of two to three sessions until the character reaches a place where the rhythm of the story allows a natural place to rest.

The adventures that you publish play a part in our campaigns, either as an adventure taken in its entirety, or as pieces used to round out an already existing plot. What I was hoping for is a section in your "Scaling the Adventure" sidebars that would give a suggested level for a party of one. You can even use the name. This would allow smaller gaming groups to use the resources that you provide.

Thank you for seriously considering this idea. Also thank you for hours of distraction and enjoyment!

Matthew M. Murphy
Via Email

That's a very, very interesting idea, Matt! We'll see if we can't give it a try in the near future.



TAMMERAUT'S FATE

BY GREG A. VAUGHAN

ARTWORK BY PETER BERGTING • CARTOGRAPHY BY ROB LAZZARETTI

"Tammeraut's Fate" is a D&D adventure designed for four 6th-level player characters. Characters of any class are suitable, although a cleric and an arcane spellcaster would be extremely helpful. Characters with skill in Craft (trapmaking) have a chance to shine later in the adventure, and since the end of the adventure is set underwater, at least one character should have access to spells like *water breathing* or *alter self*.

Although this adventure is set in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK on a small island off the coast of Nyrond in Relmor Bay, it can easily be adapted to another coastal setting that has experienced a war in the recent past. DMs of FORGOTTEN REALMS campaigns might set "Tammeraut's Fate" off the coast of Cormyr, and the Scarlet Brotherhood attackers mentioned in the Background could be from Zhentil Keep, Mulmaster, or the Pirate Isles. The deity Procan should be replaced by Shaundakul or perhaps Helm.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A decade ago, the baleful fires of continental war engulfed the Flanaess. The demigod Iuz the Evil mobilized demon-led armies in the northlands, swallowing neighboring nations and alarming goodly folk from the Nyr Dyv to the Azure Sea. To the east, the mad Overking Ivid the Undying rallied the disciplined armies of the Great Kingdom westward, hoping once and for all to crush the insolent Kingdom of Nyrond, which had once been a vassal of Aerdy. Nyrond's king and generals looked uneasily to the north and east, wary of the developments of each passing day. But another threat loomed upon the southern seas—the insidious Scarlet Brotherhood, a racist organization of fighting monks and enslaved "savage" warriors from the Amedio Jungle and Hepmonaland.

Fearing a sea invasion by the Servants of the Scarlet Sign, Nyrond established a fortification and garrison on Firewatch Island, a small isle between the Shantadern peninsula and the mouth of the Nesser River (hex F1/19 on the LIVING GREYHAWK *Gazetteer* map of the Flanaess). Most importantly, they constructed a signal beacon that could be lit to warn watchers on the mainland of an approaching Scarlet Brotherhood fleet.

Nyrond's rulers had reason to fear. Shortly after the base's establishment, the Brotherhood dispatched a war galley to secretly capture Firewatch Island in an attempt to prevent early warning of a larger fleet to arrive in the coming weeks. The war galley, the *Tammeraut*, was captained by a Brotherhood agent named Syrgaul, a sorcerer and devotee of Wee Jas who also happened to be the last surviving scion of the ancient Suloise noble house from which the ship took its name.

The sea gull familiar of the Firewatch garrison's resident wizard spotted the *Tammeraut* as the ship approached the island, and brought word to its master. The island's small contingent of defenders knew they stood little chance against a fully outfitted war galley, and the group's chaplain beseeched Procan the Stormlord, god of the seas, for aid. Whether by divine intervention or blind luck, a sudden storm blew in, sinking the *Tammeraut* with all hands aboard.

Firewatch Island was spared. The Scarlet Brotherhood never learned the fate of its expeditionary force, and assumed that the southern coast of Nyrond had been more heavily defended than they had anticipated. Uprisings in other conquered lands soon distracted them, and they never carried through their plans for a naval invasion of Nyrond.

A week after Firewatch's miraculous salvation, all contact with the island ceased abruptly. A patrol went to investigate and found the outpost completely abandoned. Distracted by the war pressing on all sides, Nyrond was never able to reoccupy the distant outpost or discover the fate of its garrison. When the war finally ended, the need to refortify the island seemed distant, and it was left derelict. A few years later, a hermitage devoted to the contemplation of nature established itself in the abandoned fortress. They opened the island to members of all faiths who desired solitude in which to meditate. The lay brothers and sisters of Firewatch went about their peaceful contemplation, unmolested for years.

Unfortunately, the doom that fell upon Firewatch toward the end of the war has not fully passed. When the *Tammeraut* broke up and sank, the battered ship settled above an underwater chasm known as Dagon's Maw. This evil chasm once held a portal to an oceanic layer of the Abyss that had long ago been sealed and warded by the shamans of several tribes of sea elves native to Relmor Bay. The shattered wreckage of the *Tammeraut* landed atop this seal and damaged it. Captain Syrgaul Tammeraut was caught in his cabin as the ship sank, and a bubble of air caught in the chamber allowed him to escape drowning until

the ship struck bottom and burst open. As the waters of the deep rushed in and the captain began to drown, the ship's hull dropped into Dagon's Maw. As the trapped sorcerer drowned, strange energies in the Maw transformed him into a ghost.

Fueled by Syrgaul's hate and rage, the energies escaping the rift infused the bodies of the other drowned solders as well, transforming them into wretched undead known as drowned ones. Although Syrgaul was unable to venture far from Dagon's Maw in his new undead state, the same restriction did not apply to his crew. He ordered his drowned one minions to march across the sea floor to Firewatch Island and destroy the unsuspecting garrison. When they were done, they dragged the corpses of their victims back as sacrifices to the evil rift. After the flurry of destruction and horror, the drowned ones and the ghost fell into a restless slumber of undeath beneath the waves.

Recently, a cleric of Procan named Janore Stormswake joined the hermitage at Firewatch Island. Her presence and devotion to the deity that originally sank the *Tammeraut* awakened the vengeful wrath of the undead in Dagon's Maw. Once again, Syrgaul sent his drowned one minions to slaughter the residents of the island. Janore managed to escape this first attack by hiding in a secret cellar with a few other inhabitants of the hermitage. There they trembled in fear through the night as they listened to the sounds of slaughter above. The drowned ones killed everyone they could find, and although they could still sense her presence they were unable to locate Janore. As the new day dawned, they sank once again into the surf, but they did not go far. Come nightfall, they intend to return and finish the job.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

As the adventure opens, the PCs are traveling along Nyrond's southern coast when they come across a corpse being devoured by harpies. In the nearby village of Uskarn, they learn that the deceased was a resident of the hermitage on Firewatch Island, some 5 miles out to sea. The hermit evidently died after swimming to the mainland. At the villagers' behest, the party takes the daily ferry out to the island to check on the hermits. They arrive in the late afternoon on the day following the most recent slaughter.

As the ferry departs, the PCs find Firewatch Island strangely deserted. Upon searching the hermitage, the PCs discover signs of the previous night's battle, and encounter several scavengers attracted by the carnage. The characters may even uncover clues to the fate of the original soldiers who were garrisoned here. Eventually, they locate the entrance to the secret cellar and the survivors hiding there. The survivors describe their attackers as creatures from the sea who fought with deadly skills and strange abilities. The cleric, Janore Stormswake, received a premonition of the coming attack and guided the others to their hiding place. Her premonition has warned her that the attackers will return at nightfall.

The PCs have the rest of the evening to prepare whatever defenses they can for the coming attack. There are several items and locations within the hermitage that can be used as traps or defensible positions. As night falls, the drowned ones return. Throughout the night, the PCs must defend themselves and the other survivors from the relentless attacks of the undead, some of whom are skilled monks and assassins.

As the survivors await the next day's ferry to deliver them back to the mainland, they have a chance to learn more about the source of the drowned ones by investigating the bodies of slain undead and by using divinitory magic such as *speak with dead*. Additionally, during their investigation of the island they may discover an ancient wizard's tower. Within the tower are journals that describe the sinking of the *Tammeraut*. The journal describes Dagon's Maw and the need to reseal it, as the smoldering evil within the now-pierced prison poses a growing threat to the entire coast.

If the PCs wish, they can travel out to sea and descend to the wreckage of the *Tammeraut*. There they find the last few drowned ones tasked with guarding the rift. Descending through the wreckage, the PCs enter Dagon's Maw and encounter the ghostly Syrgaul. There, they may reseal Dagon's Maw, doing a great service to all who live along Relmor Bay.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The exact reason why the PCs are on Nyrond's coastal road is up to you, and has been left unstated to best fit your campaign and style of play. If you're having difficulty inventing a reason, consider using one of these adventure hooks:

Naval Delivery: While visiting the nearby navy town of Nessermouth (pop. 3,100), the PCs received a seemingly easy mission to deliver a sealed message to a naval ally in the small

town of Shantadern, northeast along Nyrond's coast. The mission is not time sensitive, leaving the party a free day or two to investigate any mysteries that might happen to come their way. The contents of the letter and the goals of the involved NPCs are left vague, to best fit the circumstances of your campaign.

Morley's Debt: A devious Shantadern merchant named Davus Raal (LE male human Rog10) contacts the PCs, offering a financial reward to anyone able to locate a dwarf called Morley Tobe (area 25), who absconded from Shantadern after failing to repay an 8,000-gp debt owed to Raal. The merchant knows Morley has fled to Firewatch Isle, pretending to be a religious hermit in an attempt to dodge his mounting financial obligations. Raal wants the PCs to get the money or return the penniless Morley to Shantadern (where he'll be sold to a pirate captain to recoup Raal's considerable losses).

You Scratch My Back: During an earlier adventure, the PCs discover they need a bit of information, a rare spell component, a piece of a map, or whatever. A sage named Vortanim, a member of the ruling council of the village of Uskarn, has what the PCs need, but won't give it to them until they explore the mystery of Firewatch Isle.

THE ROAD TO USKARN (EL 7)

Regardless of the party's motivation for travel, the adventure begins with the following encounter as they travel the coast highway near the village of Uskarn.

> The road here is little more than a gravelly track as it hugs the coastline along the breakers of Relmor Bay. The day is hot, and the air is thick with the sounds of the beach and the sea. Suddenly, harsh cries and the sounds of a scuffle reach your ears from ahead on the road. Rounding a curve, you see some sort of melee in progress. To the side of the road, three filthy bird-like women screech and flail at each other, apparently fighting over a body lying on the sand beneath them.

Creatures: These three monsters are harpies. They found this corpse a few minutes ago and are currently fighting over who gets to eat it. They are quite distracted, and suffer a –5 penalty on Listen and Spot checks. The harpies are several miles from their lair and carry no treasure with them.

Harpies (3): hp 45, 38, 29; *Monster Manual* 150.

Development: The body on the beach is the corpse of a human male, obviously recently deceased. The harpies have not yet been at him and there are no visible marks as to the cause of death. He appears to be in his late 50s to early 60s, with a long, scraggly gray beard and short gray hair balding at the crown. His left ear is missing, though it is obviously a very old wound. He wears only a pair of homespun, water-soaked breeches, and his skin is wrinkled from recent immersion. The body's face is drawn and haggard, its hair and breeches encrusted with salt. A successful Heal check (DC 15) determines that there is no water in his lungs, and that he apparently died of exhaustion.

Speak with dead produces an incoherent rambling about terror in the dark and the sea being the only escape, although a careful questioner might be able to extract further information depending upon the questions asked.

This was Philpert, a member of the Firewatch hermitage who managed to escape the drowned one attack by swimming 5 miles of open sea to shore. He managed to cover the distance, but his body finally gave out as he dragged himself up the beach this morning.

In life, Philpert was a half-insane derelict who spent much of his time slumming in Uskarn and living off the charity of its citizens. Eventually, he joined the Firewatch hermitage, where he finally found peace and was able to recover some lucidity in a life of tranquil meditation. The horror of the drowned one attack shattered his sanity, and he tried to make the difficult swim for shore. His terror prevented him from noticing much more about the attackers aside from the fact that they came from the sea, were humanoid in appearance, and had glowing eyes and rotting flesh.

♛ **Uskarn (village):** Conventional; AL N; 200 gp limit; Assets 9,450 gp; Population 954; Mixed (human 79%, elf 5%, dwarf 3%, gnome 2%, half-elf 1%, half-orc 1%).

Authority Figures: Vortanim, male human Exp8 (sage, councilman); Bellis Bellweather, female human Exp4 (councilwoman); Mirria Delvane, female human Exp4 (councilwoman); Valissia Arrowen, female elf Exp2 (councilwoman); Skeldruff Plenk, male human Exp2 (councilman); Marius Golpin, male human Exp2 (councilman); Feldrin Kane, male human Ari3 (royal bailiff); Merrick, male human Ftr6 (royal sheriff).

Important Characters: Ulder Rasterhill, male human Exp2 (ferryman); Griff Talsin, male human Rog6 ("merchant" with ties to pirates in the nearby town of Shantadern).

Others: Fulger Twane, male human Clr3–Pelor; Pelorian acolytes, male and female human Clr1 (×2); royal deputies, male and female human Ftr3 (×2); royal officers, male and female human Ftr1 (×4); Griff's men, male human Rog3 (×2), male human Rog1 (×4); Adp1 (×4); Ari1 (×4); Com8 (×1); Com4 (×2); Com2 (×4); Com1 (×841); Exp1 (×27); War1 (×46).

Notes: Most of Uskarn's inhabitants earn their living fishing the shallows of Relmor Bay or venturing further out to sea for more impressive catches. The village boasts an unusually large port for its size, used throughout the year by Nyrond's efficient navy, which spends most of its time in Relmor Bay or docked at Oldred or Mithat (no naval ships anchor at Uskarn when the PCs arrive).

A village council of six respected merchants guides general policy for the town, but true power lies in the hands of Feldrin Kane, an intimidating royal bailiff who ensures that the independent-minded natives don't stray too far from King Lynwerd's vision for greater Nyrond. His taciturn agent Merrick commands a small force of deputies and officers who maintain order in the village and who look poorly upon foreign troublemakers.

Several of Merrick's men are in the pocket of Griff Talsin, ostensibly a maritime merchant trading in fine cloth and dry goods but actually a black-hearted privateer who gets most of his goods from illegal raids against Ahlissan coastal villages across the bay. Any trouble with Talsin surely attracts the attention of more powerful piratical allies in Shantadern, which could lead to further adventures.

A trip to the village of Uskarn isn't required to complete this adventure, but the PCs are likely to visit if only to secure passage from the village to Firewatch Island via the ferry. The ferry makes the journey to Firewatch once a day at noon to deliver supplies and passengers; a one-way trip costs 5 sp. The ferry is captained by Ulder Rasterhill (Exp2, Profession [sailor] +6), a foul-mouthed and short-tempered man who begrudges his fate as a backwater ferryman. He won't consider scheduling additional trips out to Firewatch for anything less than 50 gp, but if he gets the sense that the PCs are rich he'll hold out for more.

If the PCs ask about Philpert in Uskarn, the villagers recognize him immediately. Any resident can tell the PCs about Philpert's history in town, most know he'd been living at the Firewatch hermitage for the past several months. The people of Uskarn are understandably concerned about the peaceful hermits. They have no money to offer the PCs as incentive, but ask them to check on the hermitage nevertheless to make sure everything's alright.

If you used the "You Scratch My Back" adventure hook, Councilman Vortanim offers to give the PCs what they want in exchange for the heroes investigating the situation 5 miles out to sea.

FIREWATCH ISLAND

The ferry to Firewatch Island isn't particularly fast (mostly due to its captain's poor attitude), and generally takes 3 hours to reach the landing on Firewatch. The island is 5 miles from shore, so a party of 6th-level characters likely won't have any alternatives to reach the island. *Water walk, fly,* and other spells simply won't last long enough with one casting for a standard character to traverse this distance. A 6th-level character could use *alter self* to assume the form of a swimming or flying creature that could possibly cover this distance, but unless all of the party members can cast this spell, doing so merely serves to split up the party.

Read the following as the PCs approach.

> The rays of late afternoon sunlight make the waves sparkle as Firewatch Island comes into view. The island has two barren peaks, one reaching approximately 300 feet and the other 100 feet. Narrow rocky beaches line the shores, and small wiry shrubs grow here and there on the sparse landscape. Between the two promontories sits a small fortress and beacon tower. The building is made of stone and looks to have two floors. A bell tower rises an additional two floors above the rest of the building, and a stone wall surrounds the whole complex. A short path leads from a single gate in the wall down to a single short pier that juts into the ocean. The dock is deserted, and all you can hear are the calls of seagulls and the crashing of the breakers.

As the characters approach the island, the ringing of the tower's broken bell breaks the silence. The bell rings five times before a large bird-like creature swoops down from above to land in the belfry. The creature does not emerge from the belfry, and the bell does not ring again. The bell-ringer was in fact Aaron Kelderman, one of the hermitage's survivors. He spied the PCs as they approached the island and wanted to make sure they knew people still lived on the island and needed aid. Unfortunately, the bell attracted the attention of a monstrously large peryton, and Aaron was slain for his troubles.

Firewatch Island's minimal animal life consists of only small vermin and local sea life. The most dangerous denizens of the island are little more than scavengers like dire rats and Huge vipers that dwell in the rocky peaks to either side of the hermitage. The stink of the corpses in the structure and in area 14 has started to draw additional scavengers to the island as well.

When the fortress was constructed, the Kingdom of Nyrond was short on funds and had more pressing military concerns along its northern and eastern borders. Originally, the entire complex was to be surrounded by a wall, but funding ran low and the wall was never completed. As a result, the south approach to the fort is open to attack. When the hermits moved to the island, they made few changes to the fortress.

Unless otherwise noted, the walls of the Firewatch hermitage are of mortared masonry. The ceilings are 10 feet high, and the floors are of fairly smooth flagstones. There are no movement penalties within the hermitage. The roofs are of heavy slate tiles except in locations where they have fallen or broken and been replaced with thatch. All arrow slits are 3 feet high by 6 inches wide. They do not have shutters.

Masonry Walls, Floors, and Roof: 1 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 15 (for the walls).

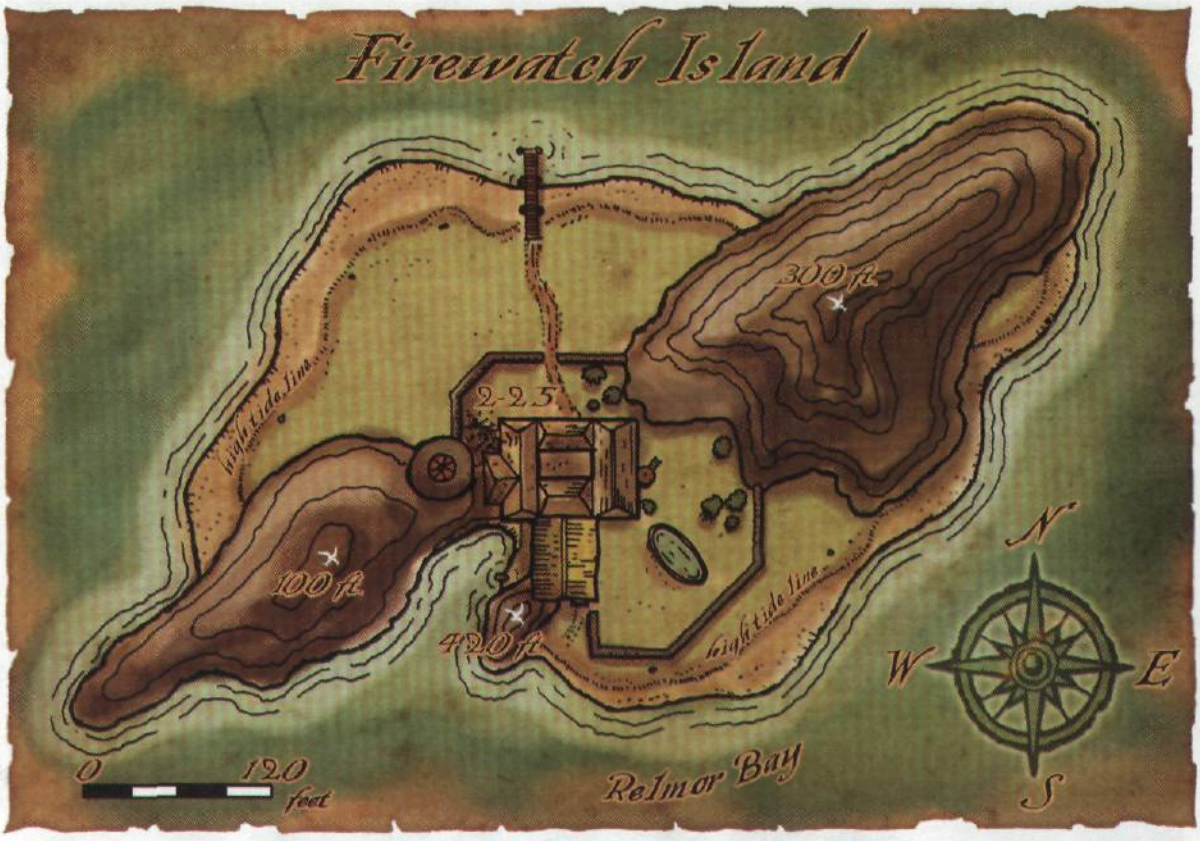
Wooden Doors: 1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC (Blocked) 16; Break DC (Locked) 18; Open Locks DC 20.

Thatch Roof: 6 in. thick; Hardness 1; hp 10; Break DC 15.

The player characters aren't the only ones exploring the hermitage and Firewatch Island. Many scavengers have flocked to the structure, drawn by the smell of death and blood. These creatures remain fairly localized and don't emerge from their designated areas, except possibly to pursue fleeing characters. Two of the island's other visitors aren't as stationary.

The sea hags in area 3 recently arrived on the island after watching the drowned one attack from afar. They know that there are still survivors somewhere on the island, and have chosen to hide and wait for the survivors to crawl out into the open before they attack. If the PCs pass through the yard where they're hiding without discovering them, the hags stalk the PCs and attack at an opportune moment.

A more active threat is the Large peryton resting in the belfry (area 24). Although it's asleep when the PCs first arrive, it



notices any particularly loud combats or events that occur on the island or in the hermitage and comes to investigate. If it notices the PCs, it attacks immediately, retreating to area 24 to recuperate if seriously wounded.

1. PIER AND BEACH

The wooden pier is in fairly good shape due to regular (if somewhat unskilled) maintenance from the hermitage residents. Wooden pilings anchor the pier into the rocky beach below, creating a dry walkway to well above the high tide line. No boats are docked at the pier.

If the characters took the ferry to the island, the captain quickly offloads a shipment of dried food, several barrels of water, and a few crates of miscellaneous supplies before he casts off and returns to Uskarn.

PCs who examine the rocky ground between the high tide line and the walls of the hermitage and make a successful Search or Survival check (DC 12) notice numerous shambling footprints on the gravelly beach. These footprints were made the night before by the drowned ones as they emerged from the sea. A character with the Track feat who successfully examines these tracks can tell that they are less than 24 hours old, were made by approximately ten humanoid creatures, and travel in both directions—to and from the sea.

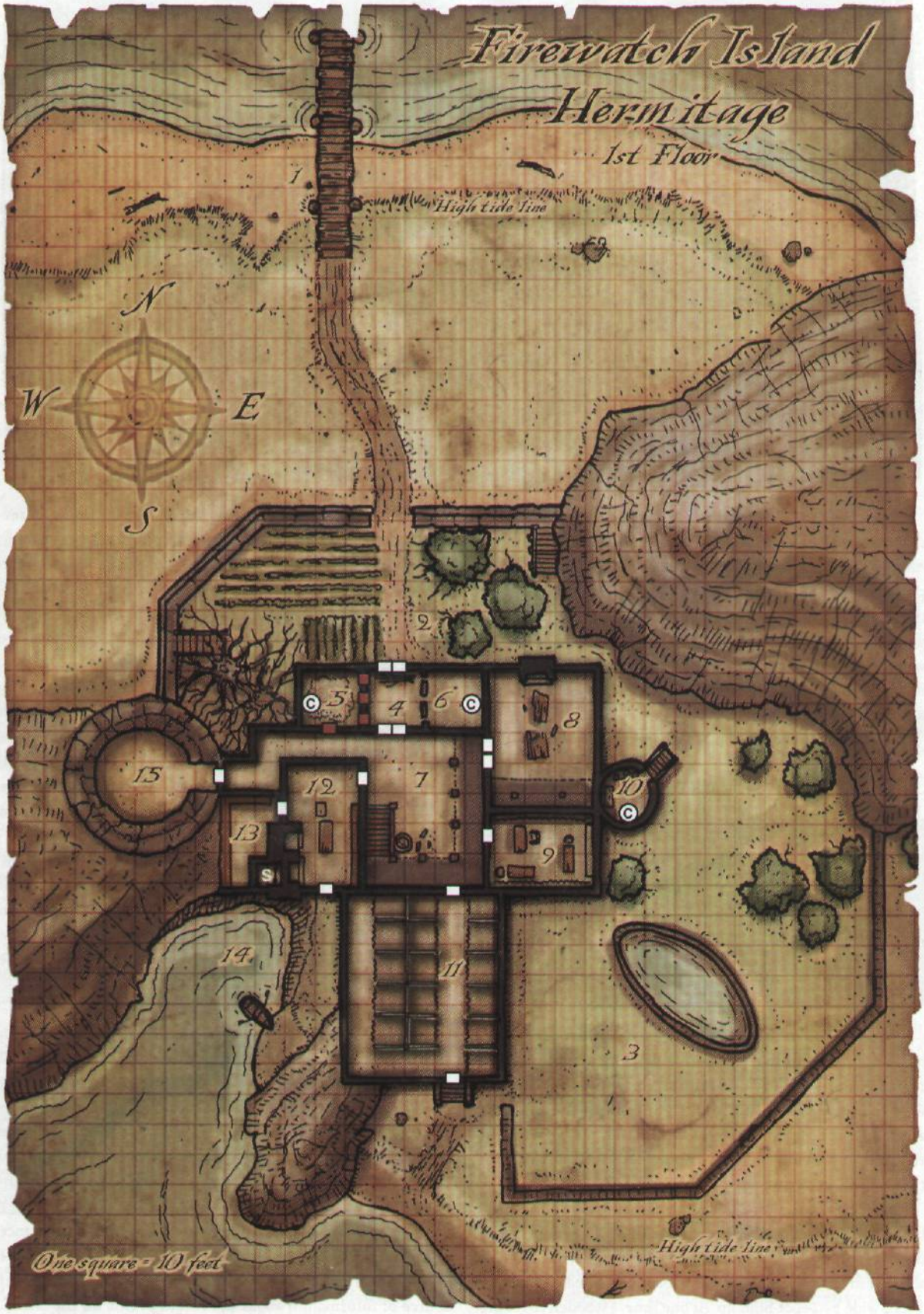
2. COURTYARD GARDENS (EL 5)

An archway in the wall allows easy access to this large courtyard, fair portions of which have been cultivated into vegetable gardens and even a small orchard of stunted apple trees. To the southwest, the base of the bell tower is all but obscured by thick growths of vines. The walkways overlooking the yard are unguarded, and the western stairs leading up have been overgrown by vines. The rock composing the courtyard's eastern wall has been hewn away to create a passage rounding the corner of the hermitage.

The wall surrounding the courtyard is 15 feet high and has a 3-foot-wide walkway on top accessed by two sets of stairs. The wall does not have any parapets to provide cover to those atop it. A pile of gardening tools lies at the base of the eastern stairs, next to wooden buckets for carrying water from the cistern to the garden.

Close inspection of the double door leading into the hermitage reveals that it was recently broken open but has been jammed shut. The door was destroyed by the drowned ones but has since been repaired by the survivors, who have barred it with broken planking from the dining hall.

Barricaded Door: 1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30 (currently 12); Break DC 22.


Firewatch Island
Hermitage
1st Floor
High tide line
N
W
E
S
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
S
High tide line
One square = 10 feet

Creatures: The vines at the base of the bell tower are actually two assassin vines. They have been somewhat domesticated by Tallos, a druid who lived at the hermitage. He transported both vines from the mainland in large clay pots, and they are still rooted within those vessels. Tallos cultivated the vines for their fruit to create a homemade assassin vine berry wine. The other residents knew to give the vines a wide berth. Anyone climbing the western stairs is within range of one of the vine's attacks.

Assassin Vines (2): hp 36, 30; *Monster Manual* 20.

3. YARD AND CISTERN (EL 6)

A short wall enclosing this broad sandy expanse does little to obscure an open vista of the beach and sea. A small tower accessible by an external stair abuts the hermitage's eastern wall. Several scrub bushes are scattered through the yard around a large oval pool. Part of the northern rock wall has been hewn away to create a passage around the corner of the building.

When the fortress was originally constructed, the builders intended to enclose this yard with a 3-foot-wide, 15-foot-high wall. Lack of funding resulted in a masonry wall that extends only 3 feet high, leaving the southern approach open to attack. A small watch tower was constructed to provide some additional defense, but this addition is more cosmetic than useful.

The center of the yard holds the cistern where the island's inhabitants collect rain water for drinking and washing. During dry seasons, hermits augment the well with barrels of water shipped in from the mainland. The flagstone-lined cistern has a 1-foot-wide by 1-foot-high lip. At one time, a wooden cover prevented evaporation, but residents broke it up for firewood several winters ago. Now the cistern tends to run low; although recent rains have filled it to its full 7-foot depth. Anyone who peers into the pool and makes a successful Spot check (DC 15) sees what appears to be a humanoid shape in the depths of the pool; this shape is in fact one of the **Creatures** that have recently arrived here.

A successful Search or Survival check (DC 10) around the southwestern corner of the yard reveals bloody drag marks in the gravel extending from the southern door of area 11 to the high tide line. Among the drag marks are many humanoid footprints. A successful Survival check (DC 15) made by someone with the Track feat confirms that the blood swath leads from the hermitage into the sea.

Creatures: Two sea hags arrived in this area earlier in the day, called from their lair below Relmor Bay by the stink of blood in the water around the island. One hides at the bottom of the cistern pool. The other lurks amongst the scrub to the east, using her Hide skill in an attempt to ambush anyone who enters the area.

Sea Hags (2): hp 18, 11 (*Monster Manual* 144).

Tactics: The sea hags wait for potential victims to approach the cistern's edge. At this point, the hag lurking in the scrub to the east uses her evil eye ability on the most powerful-looking character before stepping out and revealing her horrific appearance. The other sea hag likewise uses her evil eye before attempting to drag a PC down into the cistern to drown. They have little desire to get killed, however, and if seriously threatened they try to flee or beg for mercy.

Development: These two hag sisters observed the advance of the drowned ones on Firewatch from a safe distance. If the PCs grant them quarter, the hags can serve as an excellent source of information about the recent events on the island.

The hags have lived in the area for many years, and witnessed the first drowned one attack on Firewatch back in 583 CY (the current year is 593 CY). They refer to the drowned ones as "walkers," because the creatures plod along the floor of the bay, never swimming. They did not see the shipwreck during the storm and only know that the walkers come from Dagon's Maw, to which they can give general directions. They did manage to catch a lone drowned one and kill it after last night's attack, and can say only that it had the sign of the crossed eels. This refers to a tattoo of the Scarlet Brotherhood's red shuriken emblem. A successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check (DC 30) could make the connection between the hags' description and the Scarlet Brotherhood's heraldic device.

Treasure. The hags have gathered some treasure since their arrival on the island and have deposited it in the silt at the bottom of the cistern. A successful Search check (DC 18) reveals a sack of 50 gp, a gold paperweight in the shape of a tortoise worth 100 gp, and a silver candelabra stamped with the symbol of Procan worth 50 gp.

4. MAIN ENTRY

Pieces of broken planking and debris are braced against the poorly repaired northern doors of this room. A twisted door lock lies on the floor nearby, apparently torn from one of these doors. The southern doors have been nearly ripped from their hinges and hang loosely. Blood stains spatter the floor, and barely discernible footprints track across the room. Dark arrow slits look in from the east, their apertures shrouded by cobwebs. The western wall bears visible outlines where similar arrow slits have been bricked over.

A fair number of drowned ones burst through this chamber to catch the hermitage by surprise. The arrow slits are 3 feet high by 6 inches wide, but the room beyond cannot be seen without a light source. A successful Spot check (DC 13) reveals cobweb-shrouded murder holes in the ceiling.

A character with the Track feat who makes a Survival check (DC 12) can discern that the footprints were made by at least nine shod humanoids that were entering the hermitage, and that each footprint seems to be surrounded with a thin crust of sea salt.

5. MIDDEN (EL 3)

A foul stench permeates this dark room. A large pile of offal and garbage lies beneath the trapdoor in the ceiling. A ladder is bolted to the west wall below the trapdoor. The bricked over outlines of three arrow slits line the east wall, and to the south an entire doorway has been bricked up.

The inhabitants of the hermitage have been using this room as a dump and privy, dropping their refuse through the trapdoor above. They bricked over the arrow slits and door to contain the smell. Any wounded character who digs through the foul pile is exposed to filth fever (DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide* 292) and must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) to avoid getting sick. A successful Search check (DC 12) reveals some missing stones in the masonry of the north wall that have been mostly buried by undergrowth and refuse; a Small or smaller creature could squeeze through this hole fairly easily, but a Medium creature must make a successful Escape Artist check (DC 30) to do so.

Creatures: Six dire rats root through the garbage here. The fiercely territorial creatures attack any who interrupt their feast.

Dire Rats (6): hp 6 each; *Monster Manual* 64.

Trap: One of the higher rungs of the ladder has rotted and breaks if more than 50 lbs. is placed upon it.

Weakened ladder rung: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6, fall); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 20.

Treasure. Anyone who takes the time and risk to dig through the garbage and makes a successful Search check (DC 25) finds a *brooch of shielding* (86 points of damage remaining) that was lost down the privy long ago.

6. ARCHER'S POST

Cobwebs shroud this apparently abandoned room, obscuring three arrow slits on the west wall. A ladder bolted to the east wall leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

Although there is nothing of interest here, this room could make a fairly defendable holdout later in the adventure when the drowned ones return.

7. SCULLERY

Stairs rise to a railed balcony encircling part of the room 10 feet above in this large, vaulted chamber. Heavy crossbeams reinforce the 20-foot-high slate tile ceiling. Here and there missing ceiling tiles have been covered over with thatch. Near the staircase stands a large rusty metal tub and a broken wooden frame. The floor bears splatters of blood and obvious signs of a recent scuffle.

The hermitage residents used this area as a scullery. The tub once served as the oil receptacle for the beacon in the tower above, but now holds dirty water used for washing dishes, garments, or the occasional bath. It currently contains mounds of crockery. The wooden frame is a drying rack. Behind the tub sits a bucket of lye with a copper scoop and several pumice stones for scrubbing.

Several of the hermits were slain in this room when the drowned ones attacked the night before. One was drowned in the wash tub (see **Treasure**, below). The blood spatters on the floor are mostly dry and appear to be about a day old. A successful Survival check (DC 10) identifies a few humanoid tracks

that cut swaths through the dried blood, indicating that at least one person survived the battle.

Treasure. One of the hermits owned a set of finely made false teeth carved of elephant ivory from Hepmonaland. These teeth are worth 150 gp, and lie prominently atop a serving platter within the wash tub, where they landed after their prior owner was drowned in the tub by an undead attacker.

8. DINING HALL

This large hall is dominated by a flagstone hearth at the northern end and a wooden balcony at the other. Rickety-looking posts support the balcony. At either end of the balcony, door-sized holes have been bashed into the stone walls. The smashed remnants of a large trestle table and a pair of benches litter the center of the room. Broken crockery is scattered about, along with chunks of fly-specked food. Windows look in from high on the east and west walls, and the vaulted ceiling is nearly 30 feet high in the center of the room.

The great hall of the fortress served as a defensive position as well as a gathering place. The eastern windows open to the outside and allow light into the hall during the day, while the western windows allowed archers on the second level to fire down upon invaders if they reached this room. The hermits widened arrow slits in the guard tower and from the entry hall balcony to create doorways up on the second floor. They then constructed the crude wooden bridge to connect the upper floor of the watchtower with the inside of the main structure. The construction job is shabby, and the two wooden poles that precariously support the entire structure look unsafe even to characters with no ranks in Knowledge (architecture and engineering). The bridge can support up to 200 lbs. of weight at any one time before collapsing. Anyone on the bridge when it collapses takes 2d6 points of damage, or half on a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15).

Two of the hermits were enjoying a late repast here when the drowned ones attacked. They went to area 7 to investigate sounds of a scuffle and were slain there. The survivors broke up the table and benches this morning to bar the entrances to the hermitage.

9. LIBRARY

Faded tapestries showing maritime scenes and storms at sea hang from the north and south walls of this cozy room. A low set of book-laden shelves rest against the far wall. Three wooden tables and several chairs occupy the rest of the room. Books are strewn about the tables and the carpeted floor. The carpet is a ragged green shag depicting a crashing wave.

A successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 15) reveals that the carpet bears the symbol of Procan the Stormlord, an Oeridian god of the seas. This chamber served as a chapel to Procan for the outpost garrison, and it was here that the chaplain prayed for divine intervention against the approaching *Tammeraut*. The residents of the hermitage, who espoused no particular religion, converted the chamber into a library. A few of the works dealing with the worship of Procan date back to the original garrison, but most are later acquisitions brought by the hermits themselves. These tomes deal with philosophy and the contemplation of nature. The books are weighty reading, but of little practical value.

A successful Search check (DC 15) locates a clue in one of the Procan chapbooks on the floor. A hand-written verse scrawled on the inside cover of the chapbook is reproduced to the right.

This amateur attempt at poetry was composed by the chaplain of the garrison the morning after the *Tammeraut* sank. He intended it as praise to Procan and a warning to foes of the Stormlord. The beginning of the verse should look familiar to anyone who's been in the belfry (area 24), and with reason. Aaron recently read this verse and used it in the belfry as a warning to the PCs, should they find it.

A successful Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check (DC 20) recognizes the name Tammeraut as the name of an ancient Suloise noble family. If the check result exceeds DC 30, the character also knows that the last of the Tammerauts were said to live in the lands of the Scarlet Brotherhood until quite recently.

Treasure: Lying atop the easternmost bookshelf is a scroll penned by Tallos the druid. He misplaced it and soon forgot about it. It is a divine scroll written at caster level 7, and contains *cure critical wounds*, *flaming sphere*, *speak with animals*, *bull's strength*, and *cure light wounds*. Hidden beneath a pile of books on the floor (Search DC 10) is a silver candelabra worth 50 gp (matching the one in area 3).

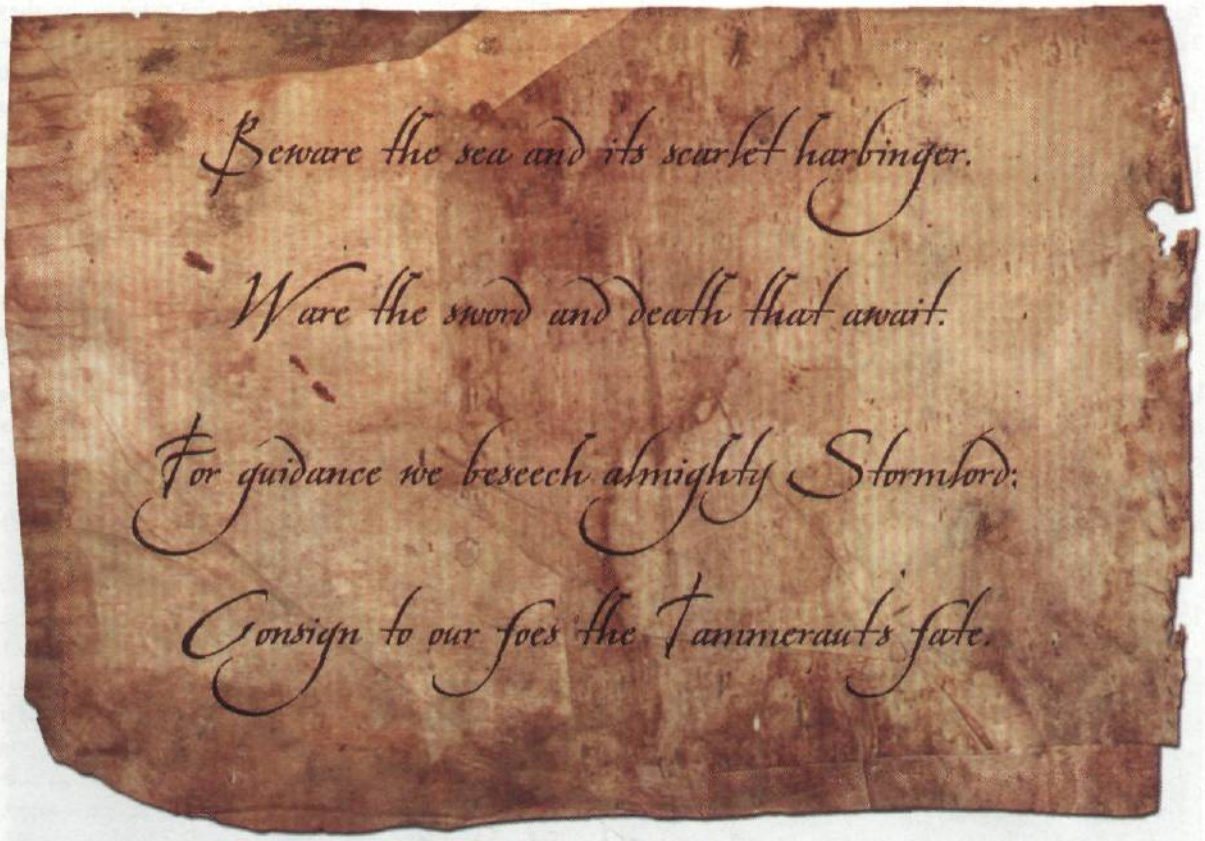
10. DISTILLERY

The walls of this dark, windowless hole are rough masonry and the floor is hard-packed earth. No ladder rises to the trapdoor from the floor. A single table rests near the western wall. It holds a collection of copper tubing and vats. Next to it are several casks. The heady scent of fermentation fills the enclosed area.

What was once an oubliette for prisoners has been converted to a distillery by Tallos. Berries harvested from his assassin vines were brought here for fermentation into assas-

Charm of Plant Command: This small charm hangs on a thin leather strap, and can be worn about the neck (using the necklace body slot) or wrapped about the arm (using the bracer/bracelet body slot). As long as it is worn, the charm allows its wearer to cast *command plants* once per day.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *command plants*; Price 11,200 gp; Weight 1 lb.


Beware the sea and its scarlet harbinger.
Ware the sword and death that await.
For guidance we beseech almighty Stormlord:
Consign to our foes the Tammeraut's fate.

sin berry wine. The tubing and vats comprise a functional still. The four casks hold a rot gut vintage of the assassin berry wine. Anyone drinking this "unique" concoction must immediately make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or become nauseated for 10 minutes.

11. HERMIT CELLS (EL 6)

What was obviously once the main barracks of this stronghold has been turned into individual meditation cells by the residents of the hermitage. Numerous wooden poles have been crudely lashed together to create 8-foot partitions. Heavy curtains hung across these frames give the illusion of privacy. The ceiling peaks 20 feet overhead to a thatched roof reinforced with wooden poles. The entire room is in shambles, with many of the partitions damaged and curtains torn apart. Debris and broken remains of simple furnishings are strewn about, and swaths of drying blood and gore fill the room with a metallic stink.

The drowned ones' main assault on the hermitage took place here. Most of the residents were sleeping in their cells and died in the first few minutes of the attack. The hermitage's only real hope of fighting off the invaders, the druid Tallos, died in his cot. All of the bodies were dragged away by the drowned ones, and the sea hags now located in area 3 did some looting here earlier in the day. Easily distinguishable in the blood on the floor are the tracks of several humanoids, some barefoot and some shod, who were engaged in the struggle. Great swaths in the blood indicate that numerous bodies were dragged out of the room via the southern door.

The individual cells hold very little in the way of furnishings or personal effects—almost everything here was broken in the fighting. Cells typically contain a crude cot (now blood-stained), a small table, and a stool or chair. Most of the hermits took vows of poverty, so there is nothing in the way of valuables to be found here.

Creatures: Hundreds of starving rats attracted by the remains of the slaughter are rummaging through this room. The drowned ones removed the corpses, so the rat swarms have found little to eat. They stream from beneath broken furniture and from behind partitions and curtains to attack anyone entering the room.

Rat Swarms (4): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 239.

Treasure: One of the partition walls of Tallos's private cell includes a hollow pole, which can be found with a successful Search check (DC 18). The druid was more than a little crazy and more than a little addicted to assassin vine berry wine. He hid two metal flasks of assassin vine berry wine (see area 10) inside this pole, along with a *charm of plant command* and a necklace composed of a string of bronzed orc teeth. This last item

was crafted from slain orcs who were despoiling a forest that Tallos protected prior to venturing to the hermitage.

12. KITCHEN

This kitchen shows signs of recent use and is fairly clean. A kettle is suspended above a large fireplace, and a brick oven sits nearby. A cutting block bearing half a loaf of bread rests in the center of the room, next to an empty table. Shelves for holding dishes and utensils line the east wall.

The kettle contains cold vegetable soup, and the bread is beginning to go stale. The western door is locked from the other side, but can be opened with a successful Open Locks check (DC 25).

Treasure: A successful Search check (DC 22) allows a character to find a copper flask containing a dose of *salve of slipperiness* at the back of one of the shelves behind a soup tureen.

13. LARDER

The walls of this room are covered with row upon row of wooden shelving that holds bags and boxes of foodstuffs. The shelves are mostly empty, explaining the need for the supplies dropped off by the ferry. A few sausages hang from hooks in the ceiling rafters, and a large bin of potatoes is scooted up against the brick rear face of the kitchen's hearth. The room appears to have been recently searched, as many of the shelves' contents have been thrown to the floor.

This room serves as a larder. Enough provisions remain to feed two dozen people for three days. A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals that the back slats of the potato bin are actually built into the brick of the hearth's rear face. These slats can easily be removed to reveal a hollow behind the kitchen fireplace. A ladder within leads down to a secret cellar below. The survivors of the prior night's attack have hidden in this cellar. The drowned ones could sense the nearness of the cleric of Procan, but failed to locate the cellar's entrance.

14. GROTTO (EL 7)

The dark rock that comprises the peaks of this island rises with the walls of the fortress to create a sheltered grotto here. A path ascends steeply 10 feet from a short strand of beach up to the hermitage's postern entrance. Pulled halfway up on the beach is a rowboat. Its stern seems to be riding rather low in the water. A large mass is barely visible below the water's surface, down near the boat.

This partially concealed grotto served as an escape route. A rowboat capable of holding up to eight Medium humanoids was kept here, complete with oars and a small sail.

When the drowned ones arrived the prior night, they destroyed the boat by smashing rocks through its hull to prevent survivors from escaping. Anyone approaching within 10 feet can see that the boat is half submerged and the hull is irreparably damaged. After slaughtering the hermitage's inhabitants, the drowned ones gathered the corpses into a large fishing net they found within the boat, weighted it with rocks, and dumped it in this grotto. After returning tonight to mop up any survivors, the undead intend to drag their net-load of corpses back to Dagon's Maw as a sacrifice to its foul evil. Anyone approaching within 5 feet of the water's edge on the beach has a clear view of this mass. The collection of corpses includes thirteen male and female corpses of humans, half-elves, and a dwarf. Many died of stabbing and slashing wounds, but others died with broken bones and blunt trauma. All have been dead for about a day and have been submerged since dawn.

Most of these corpses are intact enough that they can be interrogated with *speak with dead* spells. None of the dead hermits understand why they were attacked, but they can certainly provide information about the nature of their undead attackers.

Creature: Hiding beneath the mass of corpses is a chuul. This cousin to the land-dwelling chuul is identical in all respects save that it is a better swimmer (speed 60 ft.) and that it resides in the deep waters of Relmor Bay. This chuul was attracted by the bloody corpses left in the water, but upon finding them tied in a net it has become unsure of what to do next. It began to feed idly on the lower bodies, and has been considering the wisdom of exploring the island itself for nearly an hour. It is quick to notice anyone on the shore or entering the water. It prefers fresh meat, so it lunges out of the water to attack as soon as possible.

Chuul: hp 97; *Monster Manual* 35.

15. STORAGE (EL 4)

A successful Open Locks check (DC 30) can unlock this room's locked door.

This damp, dark, circular room smells of rot and mildew. The floor glistens with small puddles of water, and small trickles of moisture dribble down the western and southern walls. What once may have been barrels and crates stacked against the walls have decayed into almost unidentifiable heaps of rubble.

This room served as a storeroom for mundane materials for the original garrison, but has not seen any use since then. The contents of the crates and barrels are all ruined and useless, as are the containers themselves. The prior of the hermitage discovered the **Trap** in here years ago, and rather than take the risk of destroying it and possibly exposing himself to it he chose simply to lock the door and throw away the key.

Trap: A colony of green slime grows on the ceiling near the room's western wall. Anyone entering the chamber with a light source can make a successful Spot check (DC 13) to notice the bright green growth. Otherwise, anyone searching

the chamber has a 50% chance of passing beneath the slime, at which point it drops.

Green Slime: CR 4; hazard; location trigger; no reset; green slime; 50% chance of dropping on anyone searching the room (1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage per round of contact); Reflex save avoids (DC 15); *Dungeon Master's Guide* 76.

16. ARMORY

Bundles, barrels, and boxes are crowded into this room. A narrow path leads around this clutter to a staircase curving along the chamber's inner wall. These stairs rise to an open trapdoor in the ceiling.

Once an armory, this room has served as storage for accumulated junk since the hermitage's founding. All sorts of mundane tools and equipment are stored here. Most of it is in poor repair or has no practical value; a 1-foot length of hemp rope, a harp with only one string, a single left boot, a bucket with no bottom, etc. There are some useful items, including a 10-lb. cask of iron nails, a bent crowbar, three clay planters for the garden, a hammer, a rusty handsaw, a hooded lantern, a few 10-foot lengths of hemp rope, and a stack of fire wood, all of which can help in fortifying the hermitage against the second drowned one attack.

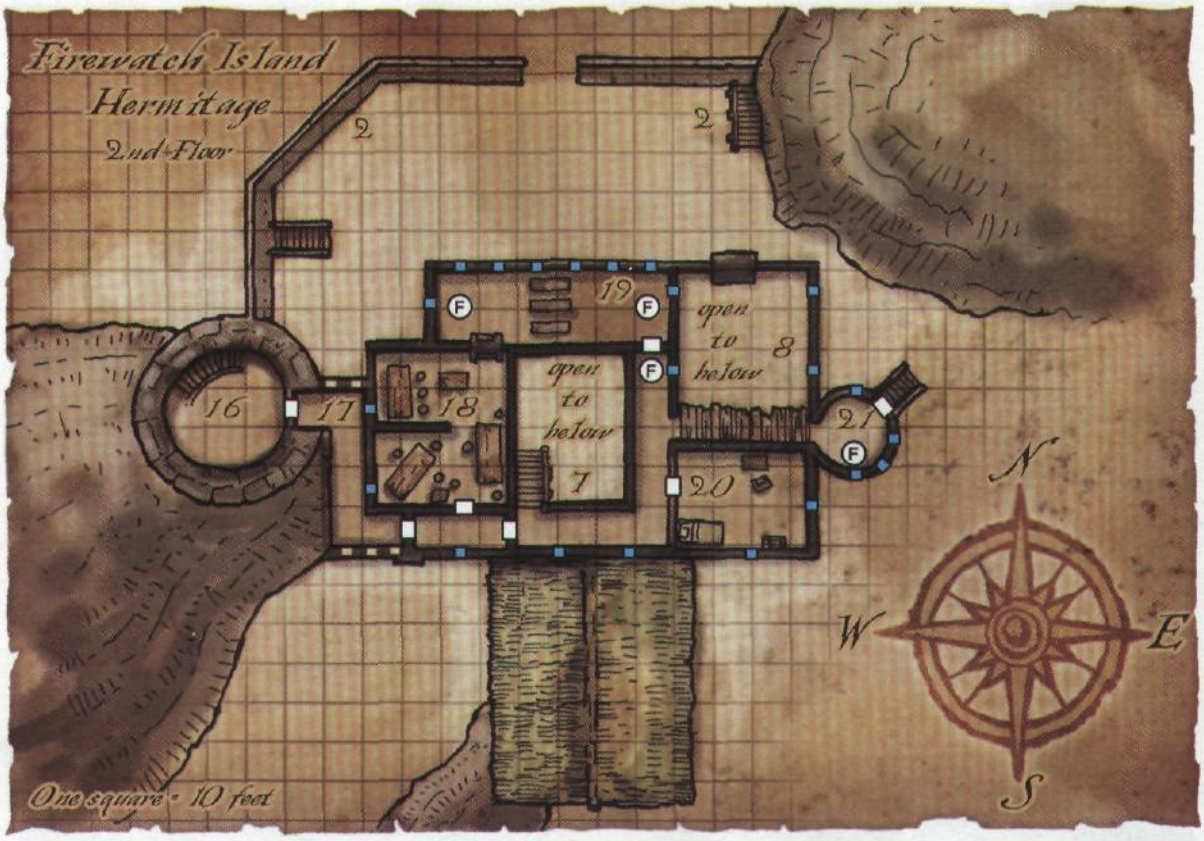
Treasure. Accidentally discarded in a pile of old rags is a *+1 light crossbow*. It can be uncovered with a successful Search check (DC 15).

17. BATTLEMENT

A walkway open to the sky overlooks a grotto formed by the island's rocky peak and the hermitage's walls. Part of the island rock has been hewn away, creating a path to the tower's entrance. A crenelated battlement runs between a stone chimney and the natural rock wall. The walls of the hermitage along the walkway bear arrow slits for defenders within.

This served as the main point of defense for the fortress' postern entrance from the grotto. Defenders gathered here to fire arrows or hurl rocks upon invaders. It remains an excellent defensive position.

If the PCs aren't particularly quiet as they move through or investigate this area, the snakes in area 18 make Listen checks to detect them. If the checks are successful, the snakes crawl through the arrow slits to attack anyone on the walkway.



18. SCRIPTORIUM (EL 6)

A partial wall divides this chamber into two sections. Two arrow slits provide some light during the day, and a small fireplace in the north wall would keep the room warm in the winter months. Several tables covered with sheaves of paper, quills, inkpots, candles, and even a few bound books crowd the room. Numerous uncomfortable-looking stools stand around them. One of the inkpots has been overturned, resulting in a large black stain upon one tabletop.

This chamber once served as the officers' quarters for the original garrison. After the hermits moved in, they converted it into a scriptorium. Here, the hermits spent their hours composing philosophical tracts, illuminating other texts, or just copying manuscripts. Completed works were moved downstairs to the library.

Creatures: Two huge coral snakes have recently moved into this chamber. The snakes originally lived in a cave on the eastern side of the isle, where they fed on dire rats. When the rats recently migrated here, attracted by the stink of blood, the snakes followed. They entered through the arrow slits to rest after feeding on a couple dire rats early in the morning. The snakes are currently coiled up in the northern section of the room. Foul-tempered, in any event, they emerge to attack anyone who trespasses on their new lair.

Huge Coral Snakes (2): hp 51, 37; *Monster Manual* 280 (Huge viper).

19. DEFENSIVE OVERLOOK

Several arrow slits along the walls of this chamber give the room adequate lighting but make it a bit drafty. Murder holes open in the center of the floor over the entry on the floor below. A fireplace inset into the south wall with a heavy iron kettle for boiling oil sits nearby these holes. A trapdoor is set into the floor at either end of this chamber.

Once vital for the garrison's defense, this chamber was rarely visited by the residents of the hermitage except to use the trapdoor into area 5 as a dump and privy.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

Pressure Capsules: A swallowed *pressure capsule* grants complete immunity to damage from water pressure. A single capsule lasts for 8 hours, and does not grant the ability to breathe water.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement*; Price 800 gp; Weight —.

20. PRIOR'S QUARTERS

The door to this chamber hangs open, the head of a light mace on the floor acting as a door stop. The room itself is modestly furnished with a cot, a table, a chest, and a chair. A basin rests on the table, and a small piece of mirror hangs from the wall above it.

The prior of the hermitage moved into the former chaplain's quarters after his sect moved onto the island. A worshipper of Lendor, the Suel god of patience and study, old Borisanth founded the hermitage and started a life of peaceful contemplation 5 years ago. He had little interaction with the other residents, due to his vow of silence. On the night of the attack he was awakened by the carnage and slain soon thereafter by a drowned one as he opened his door. The broken handle of his mace rolled under his cot.

Treasure: The unlocked chest next to the cot contains a selection of threadbare garments and worn sandals. It also holds a wooden panel painted with a crescent moon in front of a new moon. Around its perimeter are inset 14 small diamonds worth 100 gp each. The total value is 1,550 gp. Borisanth used this icon of Lendor in his meditations. Also in the chest are two blocks of amber worth 50 gp each and a *Quaal's feather token (bird)*.

The metal basin on the table holds water, and a bronze straight razor lies next to it. Closer inspection of the basin reveals that it is actually an upturned helmet bearing images of cavorting dolphins; it is actually a *helm of underwater action*. The prior was aware of the helm's properties, but had no real use for them so used it as a shaving basin.

21. GUARD TOWER

Part of the western wall of this chamber has been knocked out to create a doorway into the fortress' interior. The eastern doorway leads outside to a flight of outside stairs visible through the arrow slits. A wooden trapdoor is set into the floor, and a cloying odor rises from it. A 10-foot ladder lies next to the trapdoor.

The smell comes from the distillery in area 10 below. There is otherwise nothing of interest here.

22. ABANDONED QUARTERS

An iron-cast potbelly stove squats to the north, its stovepipe extending out the northern arrow slit. The wooden frame and slats of an old bed are pushed up against a spiral staircase that rises to a trapdoor in the ceiling above. Under an arrow slit overlooking the island's western peak sits a dusty desk covered in debris, bird droppings, and a perch for a domesticated bird. Hinges hang on either side of each arrow slit, indicating that at one time they had shutters to keep out the elements. A large portion of the western wall has collapsed inward, creating a gaping hole about 10 feet above the rocky slope below. The pile of rubble covers the smashed remains of a chair that once went with the desk.

Archais, the garrison's wizard, once resided in this chamber. It was he who first gave warning of the approaching *Tammeraut*, resulting in the chaplain's desperate prayer to Procan and the ship's resulting demise. The wizard's sea gull familiar spied the ship at sea and brought word back to him. Archais was slain with the rest during the drowned one attack that came shortly thereafter.

The weathering of storms and the salty air eventually eroded the mortar in part of the wall and caused the collapse. The room itself is still sound, but when the hermits moved in they deemed it uninhabitable due to the damage.

The desk is empty of anything valuable. In fact, anything of use has long since been destroyed by the elements or by wild animals that often use the room for shelter. The wizard's sea gull familiar, Virgil, still lives and sometimes returns to this chamber, though he was scared off by the drowned ones the night before.

Treasure: The pile of rubble in the southwest corner of the room conceals a secret compartment in part of the surviving wall just south of the western arrow slit. A successful Search check (DC 30) locates the secret compartment. If the rubble is cleared away (requiring an hour of work), the compartment becomes easier to find (DC 20).

One of Archais's hobbies was the underwater exploration of sunken ships, and this compartment contains some of the items he used in that pursuit. Within are a *ring of freedom of movement*, a flask holding 3 ounces of *sovereign glue*, three ounces of *salve of slipperiness*, three *potions of water breathing*, an *immovable rod*, a *folding boat*, a *bag of holding (type 1)* containing several nets and 500 feet of weighted hemp rope, a small metal baton the size of a torch with *continual flame* cast on it at caster level 8, and a small metal container holding six grainy capsules. These are *pressure capsules* (see sidebar on p. 34).

Anyone who investigates the inside of the compartment and makes a successful Search check (DC 15) discovers a leather backpack attached to the ceiling of the compartment by *sovereign glue*. This is where Archais kept his spellbook and his journal. His spellbook is long lost, but the journal remains inside.

Archais's journal relates his many assignments and duty stations while a member of Nyrond's military. It also includes notes about the different sunken hulks he has explored in Relmor Bay and the rivers of Nyrond. Most of the journal is moldy and illegible. The inside of the cover lists the coordinates for nearly three dozen sunken ships in Relmor Bay, the Sea of Gearnat, and even a few in the Azure Sea. The final entry on this list gives the location of the sunken *Tammeraut* and Dagon's Maw. The last few pages are intact and relate the events surrounding the coming of the *Tammeraut*. See the Journal Handout below for details.

A successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (history) check (DC 10) identifies the "Scarlet Sign" referred to in the journal as analogous to the Scarlet Brotherhood, an expansionist organization of Suel supremacists who emerged from seclusion just prior to the Greyhawk Wars. If this check exceeds the DC by 10 or more, the character recalls that Tammeraut was the name of an infamous Suel noble house that predated the Rain of Colorless Fire. After the fall of the Suel Imperium, tales of the Tammerauts spread throughout the Flanaess as they migrated eastward. Their reputation for cruelty and ruthlessness stemmed from their treatment of local Flan tribesmen and Oeridian immigrants. Eventually, the Tammerauts made their way to the Tilvanot Peninsula, where they disappeared from well-known historical record.

23. ROOF

Heavy, overlapping slate tiles form the roof of the hermitage. In many places the mortar holding the tiles in place has crumbled, and the slates have slid off to shatter on the ground below. In these places the roof is patched with thatching, creating a hodgepodge appearance. A flat area in the center of the roof provides a platform for defense, with the surrounding roof peaks providing cover.

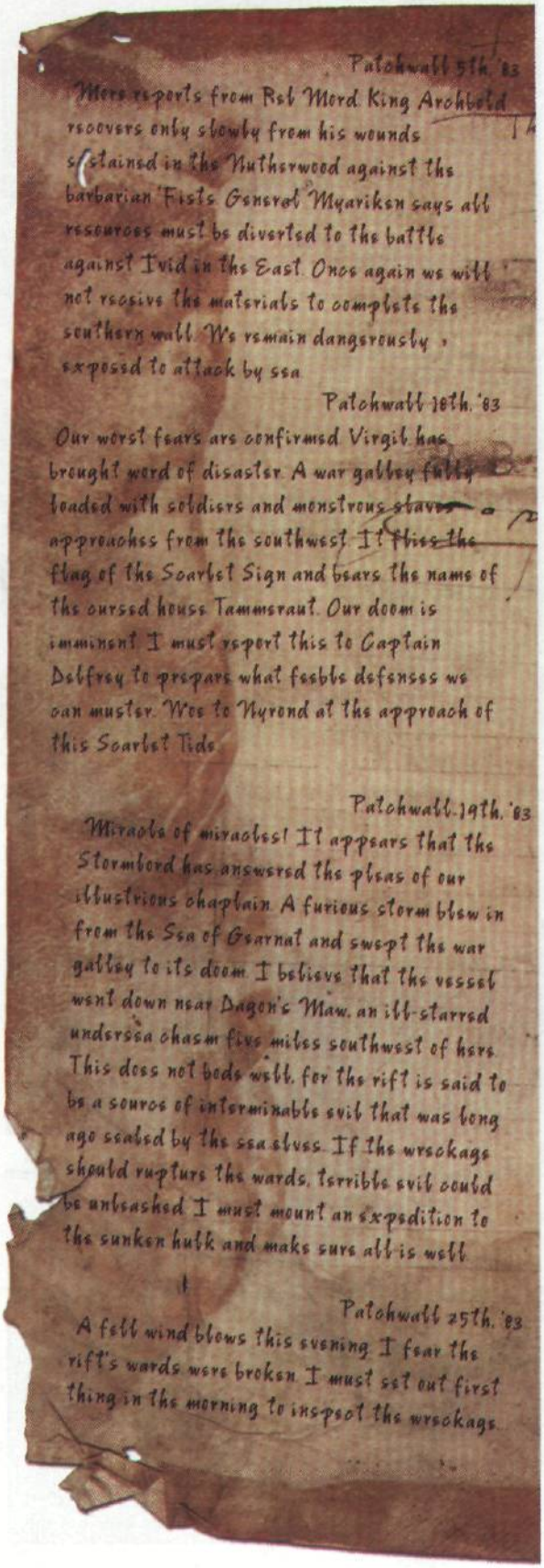
The slate tiles are strong enough to support the weight of a Large creature, although the scattered areas of thatch can only support Small creatures. Oversized creatures must make Reflex saving throws (DC 10) to avoid falling through the collapsing roof and suffering the appropriate falling damage.

24. BELFRY (EL 8)

A breathtaking view of the open sea and the distant Nyrondal coast greets the eye in this open belfry. Four stone cornerposts support a conical slate roof peaking 20 feet above. Between these columns runs a crenelated battlement. A large bronze bell engraved with symbols of peace and serenity hangs from the peak of the roof. A pull rope dangles from the rigging above. Some sort of message, written in chalk, is scrawled on the floor under the rope. A depression sits in the center of the stone floor, around which lies the base of what was once a metal framework. Sprawled in this depression is a human body, its torso torn open and its heart missing.

The belfry was originally Firewatch Island's signal beacon. The depression in the floor once held the large oil receptacle that fueled the beacon (and now rests in area 7). The metal framework once extended above this receptacle and held the lenses that focused the light of the beacon's flame. The hermitage disassembled the beacon and installed the bell for calling the residents to meals and times of meditation.

The message scrawled in chalk on the floor reads, "BEWARE THE SEA." A surviving hermit named Aaron spot-



Patchwall 5th '83

Mere reports from Rst Mord King Archbold recovers only slowly from his wounds sustained in the Nuthorwood against the barbarian Fists General Myariken says all resources must be diverted to the battle against Ivid in the East. Once again we will not receive the materials to complete the southern wall. We remain dangerously exposed to attack by sea

Patchwall 10th '83

Our worst fears are confirmed Virgil has brought word of disaster. A war galley fully loaded with soldiers and monstrous slaves approaches from the southwest. It flies the flag of the Scarlet Sign and bears the name of the cursed house Tammeraut. Our doom is imminent. I must report this to Captain Delfrey to prepare what feeble defenses we can muster. Woe to Nyrond at the approach of this Scarlet Tide.

Patchwall 19th '83

Miracle of miracles! It appears that the Stormlord has answered the pleas of our illustrious chaplain. A furious storm blew in from the Sea of Gearnat and swept the war galley to its doom. I believe that the vessel went down near Dagon's Maw, an ill-starred undersea chasm five miles southwest of here. This does not bode well, for the rift is said to be a source of interminable evil that was long ago sealed by the sea elves. If the wreckage should rupture the wards, terrible evil could be unleashed. I must mount an expedition to the sunken hulk and make sure all is well.

Patchwall 25th '83

A fell wind blows this evening. I fear the rift's wards were broken. I must set out first thing in the morning to inspect the wreckage.

ted the PCs' approaching ferry and ran here to ring the bell and alert them that people lived on the island. Unfortunately for him, the ringing bell attracted the **Creature** to the belfry. Aaron saw the monster's approach and quickly scrawled this phrase on the floor before attempting to flee back downstairs, but he wasn't quick enough; it is his body that adorns the center of the room.

Creature: A large and particularly mean-spirited peryton lurks in this room. The creature was flying from the mainland when it heard the bell ring. It flew down to investigate, found Aaron, and promptly killed him and ate his heart. The monster then decided to take a nap in the belfry and digest its meal. There is a chance that the peryton has already attacked the PCs; if they've already slain it, the beast is naturally absent. Otherwise, it may retreat here to recover from battle.

A peryton has the body of a giant eagle and the head of a demonic purple stag, complete with huge antlers. Perytons do not possess true shadows of their own, and cast the shadow of the creature whose heart they last consumed. This peryton is much larger than the standard specimen of its species. Full details on perytons can be found on page 69 of *Monsters of Faerûn*.

Advanced Peryton: CR 8; Large magical beast; HD 11d10+33; hp 93; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +11; Grp +22; Atk +17 melee (1d6+7, slam); Full Atk +17 melee (1d6+7, 2 slams), +15 melee (1d6+3, 2 claws), and +15 melee (1d8+3, bite); SA heart rip; SQ damage reduction 10/magic, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Heart Rip (Ex): If a peryton makes a successful coup de grace, it eats its victim's heart. Someone slain in this manner cannot be brought back to life by *raise dead*.

Skills: Intimidate +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +5, Survival +5.

Feats: Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Multiattack.

25. BOLT-HOLE (EL 5)

A rickety ladder leads down from the larder above into this musty subterranean chamber. Rough masonry walls enclose this irregularly shaped room. A horizontal crevice between two blocks in the south wall permits a narrow shaft of light to shine on the floor. This light illuminates the dusty, deteriorated remains of an armored corpse. Sightless eye sockets stare out of a desiccated face accusingly. Clutched in one skeletal hand is a small silver disk.

The builders of Firewatch created this hidden cellar as a refuge; and only the officers, chaplain, and resident wizard were told of its existence. The crevice served as both an arrow slit, and as a method for those with access to spells like *wind walk* or *gaseous form* to escape the room. With the first drowned one attack in 583 CY, most of the garrison was killed in their sleep. The chaplain was praying in the chapel when the undead

attacked. One drowned one found him there and they fought. The chaplain destroyed the creature but sustained a deadly wound in the process. He managed to drag himself here and hide the entrance before the searching drowned ones found it. Unfortunately, he died soon after. Sensing that no one remained alive, the drowned ones took the corpses they could find and returned to the deep.

The narrow crevice in the south wall looks out over the grotto (area **14**), and is quite cleverly hidden from the outside. A successful Search check (DC 25) made by someone searching from the outside uncovers the narrow opening.

Creatures: Hiding in this chamber are the three surviving residents of the hermitage. All three are traumatized by the recent attacks. One of the three survivors is Janore Stormswake, a cleric of Procan. Her recent arrival on Firewatch is what triggered the latest attack; the drowned ones could sense the presence of a cleric of the god who originally drove them to their doom. A fourth hermit, Aaron Kelderman, also survived the initial drowned one attack, but he was recently slain by the peryton in the belfry. Since his death, Janore and the other two survivors have been too terrified to leave this room.

Janore Stormswake, Female Human Clr4 (Procan): CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d8; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d4/crit ×3, shortspear); or +4 ranged (1d4, sling); SA spells, turn undead; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills: Concentration +4, Heal +5, Listen +5, Knowledge (nature) +4, Knowledge (religion) +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Spellcraft +4, Spot +5, Swim +0.

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

Languages: Common, Aquan, Gnome.

Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1; base save DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds* (already cast), *light, resistance, virtue*; 1st—*cure light wounds* (3) (already cast), *longstrider*, sanctuary*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds (already cast), fog cloud*, lesser restoration* (2) (both already cast).

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Travel (disregard magical effects that impede movement for 4 rounds per day), Water (turn fire creatures as a good cleric turns undead or rebuke water creatures as an evil cleric rebukes undead 5 times per day).

Possessions: Chain shirt, shortspear, sling, pouch with 8 sling bullets, wooden holy symbol of Procan.

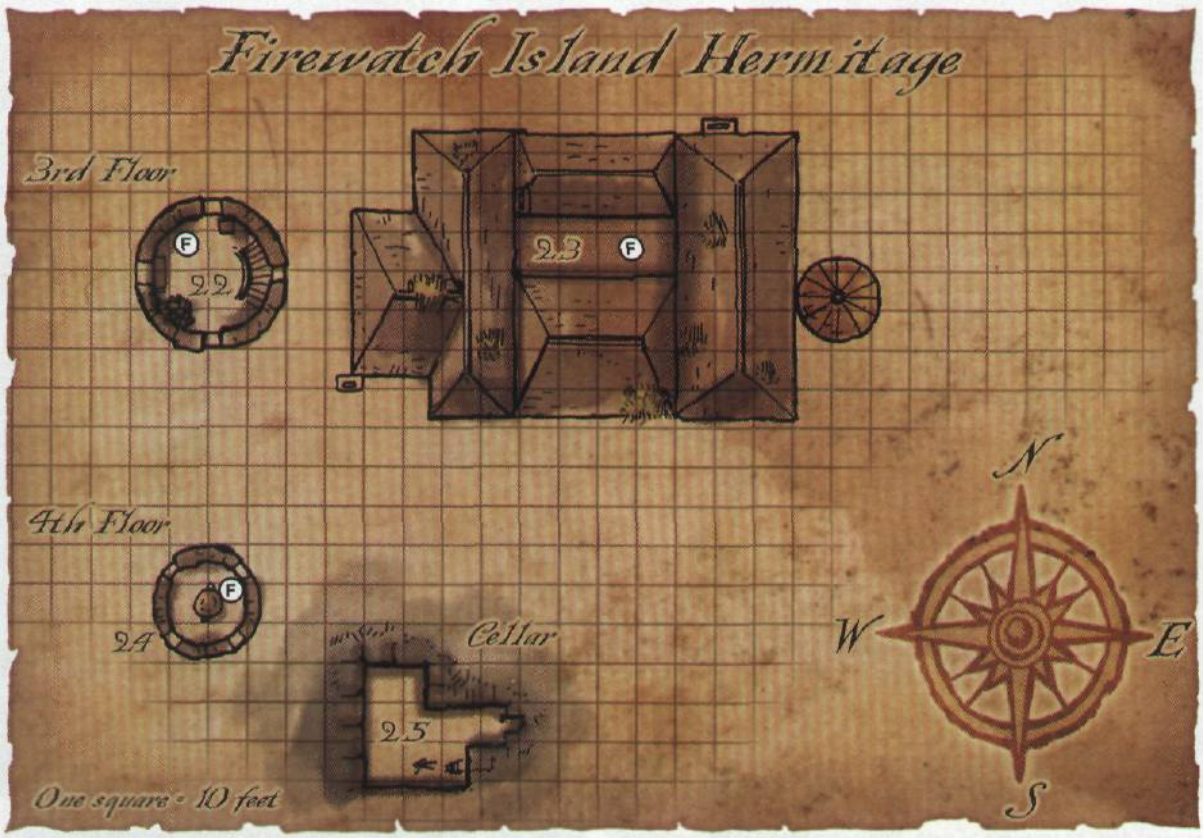
Barrett Gloffrin, Male Human Com 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d4+2; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk –3 melee (1d3–3, unarmed strike); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 13 (currently 2), Dex 10, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +5, Craft (cooking) +4, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +4, Swim +4.

Feats: Endurance, Iron Will.

Languages: Common, Dwarf, Gnome.

Notes: Barrett is currently suffering from bluerot, a disease spread by the drowned ones.



Morley Tobe, Male Dwarf Exp 3: CR 2; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 3d6+9; hp 15 (currently 9); Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk –2 melee (1d6+2, club); SA —; SQ dwarven traits; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 14 (currently 3), Dex 11, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +1, Craft (ropemaking) +6, Decipher Script +3, Gather Information +1, Jump +4, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (seas & navigation) +5, Profession (sailor) +4; Swim +6.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Craft—ropemaking).

Languages: Common, Dwarf.

Possessions: Club (fashioned from a broken table leg).

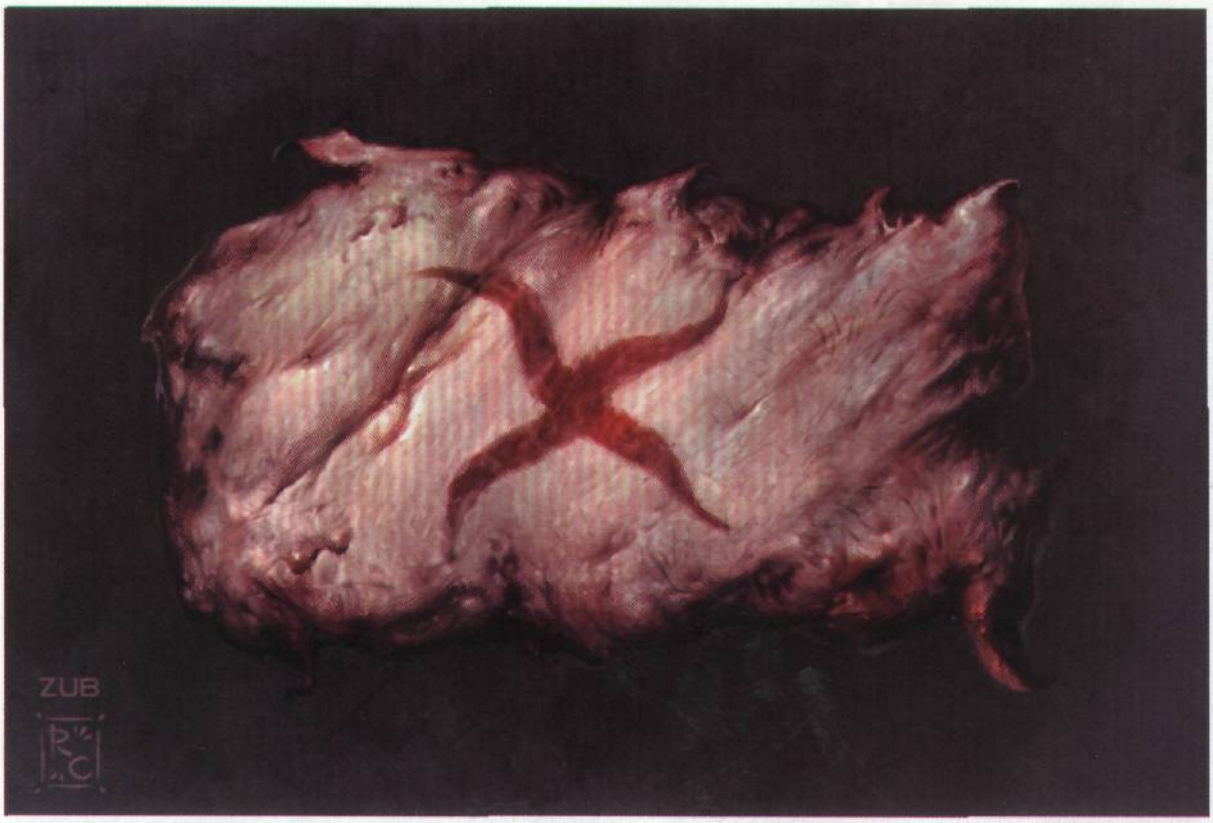
Notes: Morley is currently suffering from bluerot, a disease spread by the drowned ones. If you used the "Morley's Debt" adventure hook, the players may attempt to get the dwarf to pony up the 8,000 gp he owes Shantadern merchant Davus Raal. Morley explains that he once served on a smuggling ship owned by Raal, but fled after he discovered Raal's cargo included slaves raided from fishing villages on the Ahlissan coast. Morley freed eight healthy slaves, each worth approximately 1,000 gp apiece—the source of his "debt" to Raal. Whether Morley's telling the truth and what happens if and when the PCs next encounter the devious Davus Raal is entirely up to you.

Treasure: The dried-out corpse still wears its *+1 breastplate*, the armor is etched with the heraldic device of Nyrond. The silver disk it clutches is a holy symbol of Procan worth 25 gp.

A portion of the masonry in the back of the eastern alcove has crumbled, revealing a 3-foot-deep space beyond. Within this space is an emergency cache of supplies left by the builders of the fortress. The cache is contained in a locked wooden chest, the key to which is long lost. The chest holds three *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of cure serious wounds*, a *potion of fly*, and a 3rd-level divine scroll with *aid* and *bull's strength*. Janore suspects that something in the chest might be helpful, but since she's afraid that the sound of bashing the chest open would attract unwanted undead attention, she's been unable to get into it to find out for sure.

Locked Wooden Chest: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Open Lock (DC 25); Break (DC 23).

Development: All three of the survivors are in shock from their recent ordeal, and want little more than to escape the island. Unfortunately, two of the survivors are suffering from bluerot and are in little condition to go anywhere. Janore Stormswake is the default leader among the survivors and can give the most detailed account of the previous night's events. Before she does so, however, she asks if the PCs have encountered any other survivors in the ruins above. Aaron left earlier in the day to see if it was safe, and not long after he left the three survivors here heard the bell ringing. Janore climbed up to the larder just in time to hear



several distant screams of pain. She fears that Aaron has been wounded or even killed by something. If the characters tell her of the body in the belfry, she grows silent and confirms that the dead body is indeed Aaron. She takes the news in stride, though, and quickly tells the PCs what happened the night before.

She relates that she was reading in the library when a sudden premonition of danger came to her from Procan. This same vision also revealed to her the means of reaching this hiding place below the hermitage, and that terrible danger for the entire hermitage was only moments away. She found Aaron in the kitchen ladling himself some soup and grabbed him just as she heard the sound of the dormitory door splintering. The two quickly located the secret door revealed by Procan and hid in the bolt-hole while they listened to the sounds of their fellow residents being slaughtered. After a few minutes Morley and Barrett staggered into the larder, horribly wounded and looking for a place to hide. Against her better judgment, Janore left the bolt-hole to drag them in. She had just replaced the hidden entrance when the larder door banged open. She peeked through the slats and watched as a soggy corpse, shriveled and discolored by long immersion, stalked into the room and began to search. The sight of the thing nauseated her, and she was only just able to avoid retching and possibly drawing its attention. Miraculously, it missed the hiding place, and as the first glow of dawn touched the sky it left.

Janore noticed a tattoo on its shoulder—a faded red ink symbol shaped like a shuriken. A PC who makes a successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check (DC 15) recognizes this symbol as that of the Scarlet Brotherhood. Morley and Barrett add to the tale that they fled from the dormitory as more of the undead burst into it. Both were wounded by the creatures as they fled to the larder to hide. They are unsure of the number of attackers but can attest that all were corpses from the bottom of the sea. Some fought with rusted weapons, but others used only their hands and fantastic unarmed abilities to deadly effect.

All three are convinced that the undead attackers left only because of the arrival of the dawn. The hermits remained hidden throughout most of the day, however, fearing that the silence above was only a ploy by the lurking undead to draw them from their hiding place. It quickly became obvious that the wounds Morley and Barrett suffered are horribly diseased. Janore has been treating the symptoms as best she can with *lesser restoration* and Heal skill checks, but she fears that her fellow hermits may soon succumb to the terrible blue illness.

Janore now fears that the undead are going to return tonight to finish the job, but with both Morley and Barrett sickened she doesn't know what to do. Since the boat kept in area **14** has been damaged beyond repair, as far as the survivors know the only way off the island is when the ferry returns.

If the PCs decide to wait until tomorrow for the ferry to return to leave Firewatch, Janore and the others begin to panic, and insist on remaining in the bolt-hole until then. They are convinced that the undead mean to return tonight. None of the

survivors know exactly how many undead there are, but they speculate perhaps a dozen and feel that securing all entrances to the hermitage would be beneficial.

A successful Diplomacy check (DC 20) allows the PCs to calm down the survivors enough that they agree to leave the bolt-hole, but only if the PCs help them barricade the hermitage and possibly set up several traps for the undead. The characters can use Bluff to calm down the survivors as well, but if any of the survivors see through the Bluff it fails to calm all of them. If Morley and Barrett have been cured of bluerot or their Strength is wholly or partially restored, the PCs gain a +10 bonus on the Diplomacy or Bluff check.

DEATH FROM THE BRINY DEEP (EL 10)

Unfortunately for the PCs, Janore's fears that the drowned ones intend to return to Firewatch tonight are completely accurate. As the sun begins to set, the drowned ones begin their underwater trek from Dagon's Maw to Firewatch Island. They arrive at the island about an hour after sundown. If the PCs are still on the island at sundown and happen to be in a position to observe Firewatch's shoreline, you can foreshadow the undead assault with the following:

> The last rays of the evening sun slant across the dark waters of Relmor Bay. The day's light is failing fast, and who knows what terrors the darkness will bring? You catch movement from the corner of your eye on the beach and immediately scan the area to pinpoint the source. In the final touch of twilight you can just make out a dark humanoid form standing silently in the surf. You are positive it wasn't there a moment ago. With the next crashing breaker you lose sight of the figure in the deepening darkness. When the spray clears the figure is gone. Night has come.

See the "Building Traps" sidebar for possible ideas using resources available in the hermitage. The survivors help to the best of their ability, and Janore uses any of her remaining healing abilities for the party. The survivors themselves are not combatants, however, and want to stay out of direct conflict as much as possible. They would prefer to make attacks from positions of relative safety and then have a plan of retreat should they be pressed.

Creatures: The drowned ones assault Firewatch as detailed in **Tactics** below. They are intelligent opponents and react to obstacles efficiently. Their hatred of life drives them to track down and kill all humanoids on the island, especially clerics of

Procan, the Storm Lord

Procan is a chaotic neutral god of the seas, sea life, salt, sea weather, and navigation. Known to be greedy, tempestuous, and mercurial, his worshippers often venerate him more out of a perceived need to placate his anger than out of pure devotion. His clerics usually live on or near the sea, and are considered good luck on sea voyages. They may be leaders or enemies of pirates. Procan's holy symbol is a trident made of coral and gold over a cresting wave. His domains are Animal, Chaos, Travel, and Water, and his favored weapon is the trident.

BUILDING TRAPS

The possibilities for defenses and traps that can be prepared for the coming conflict are limited only by the imagination of the players themselves. Following are a few ideas that could be managed fairly quickly from resources available within the hermitage. The Craft (trapmaking) skill is used to build traps. Barrett Gloffrin learned this craft from snaring sea birds and lobstering, and can provide welcome assistance if no PCs have ranks in the skill.

There is a wide range of tools and locations in the hermitage that lend themselves well to trap making. Several example traps are listed below, along with the Craft (trapmaking) skill check DC required to build the trap; this DC is also the Search check required for a drowned one to notice the trap. Drowned ones don't start searching for traps until at least two of them take damage from traps.

- Loose tiles on the roof can be rigged to collapse on creatures walking under them (DC 22).
- The bridge in area **8** can be weakened so it collapses if anything walks on it (DC 20), or rigged to collapse if someone pulls on a rope from elsewhere (DC 16).
- The cask of nails in the armory can be made into crude caltrops (DC 10).
- The *salve of slipperiness* in areas **12** and **22** could be applied to the floor, a slope, or a stairway (no Craft check needed).
- Using the *charm of plant command* found in area **11** or a PC's own abilities, the characters could relocate the assassin vines in area **2** to more strategic locations (no Craft check needed).

Procan. You should play up the terror and the drama of the relentless undead in the best tradition of classic horror movies.

The force that attacks Firewatch consists of eight drowned one warriors, two drowned one monks, and a drowned one assassin.

Drowned One Fighter, Human Ftr1 (8): CR 2; Medium undead (water); HD 1d12; hp 7 each; Init +4; Spd 15 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+4 plus disease/19–20, rusted longsword); SA disease (DC 11), nauseating appearance (DC 11); SQ +4 turn resistance, deep water adaptation, electrical vulnerability, hivemind, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire 10, soulsense, sunlight powerlessness; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 10, Con —, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Swim +14.

Feats: Blind-Fight[B], Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Possessions: Rusty longsword, rotted studded leather armor, rusty heavy steel shield.

Drowned One Monk, Human Mnk4 (2): hp 26 each; see the Appendix.

Drowned One Assassin, Human Rog5/Asn2: CR 8; Medium undead (water); HD 7d12; hp 58; Init +9 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 15 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3/17–20, *+1 keen short sword*); SA death attack (DC 14), disease (DC 16), nauseating appearance (DC 16), sneak attack +4d6, spells; SQ +1 save against poison, +4 turn resistance, deep water adaptation, electrical vulnerability, evasion, hivemind, poison use, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire 10, soulsense, sunlight powerlessness, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 17.

Skills: Appraise +8, Balance +9, Climb +8, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +8, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +6, Forgery +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +7, Jump –2, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +10, Sense Motive +7, Search +7, Spot +4, Swim +14, Tumble +9, Use Rope +6.

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight[B], Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Aquan, Elven.

Assassin Spells Known (2; save DC 12 + spell): 1—*feather fall, obscuring mist, true strike.*

Possessions: +1 keen short sword, ring of protection +1.

Tactics. The assault on Firewatch by the drowned ones can be complicated, since the undead approach from multiple directions. The assault begins as six of the drowned one fighters move in from the surf under cover of darkness. Three approach from the north and enter through the main entry (area 4). The other three approach from the south; one enters through the hermit cells (area 11) and the other two enter via the kitchen (area 12). Three rounds later, a drowned one fighter and a drowned one monk approach from the southeast and enter via the guard tower (area 21). Another drowned one fighter enters from the north through the main entry (area 4), and the second drowned one monk approaches from the south and enters the hermit cells (area 11). The assassin approaches from the grotto (area 14) and attempts to climb to the battlement above (area 17) to enter the hermitage. As it does so, it notices any living creatures in the bolt-hole (area 25) via its soulsense ability. It then gets to make a Search check to locate the narrow gap in the wall; if it does so, it peers through the gap to menace any living creatures inside (which subjects them to its nauseating appearance if they are within 20 feet of the south wall) and notices the ladder leading up. If this occurs, the drowned one changes its tactics and alerts the other drowned ones via hivemind to converge in the larder (area 13) to search for the ladder leading down to the bolt-hole.

If a drowned one meets resistance at an entrance, it attempts to break or fight its way through unless other drowned ones have found an unprotected entrance. The drowned ones coordinate their actions with supernatural ease, thanks to their hivemind. They press their attack until all living creatures on the island are slain or they themselves are destroyed.

This battle should be quite difficult, but the aid of the three survivors and any trap-building preparations the PCs make should tip the balance in their favor. If you find that this assault did not sufficiently challenge the party, you can have a second or even a third assault of drowned ones occur at later points in the night. Even if this first encounter leaves the PCs' resources exhausted, you should strive to make them feel that another assault could occur at any moment as the night wears on.

THE BREAKING DAWN

With the coming of the dawn's first light, the characters should be dragging themselves from the battlefield and tending to their wounded. They deserve a rest, and unless they have found some way off the island they have most of the day to do so. The daily ferry is not scheduled to arrive until late afternoon. At some time during the day, when a character is awake and outside or near a window, read the following.

> The sultry day is silent, save for the sounds of the sea. A lone seabird circles in the sky overhead, making lazy loops on its widespread white wings. It descends and alights on a nearby rock. Up close it is recognizable as a sea gull, and a very old one at that. It has patches of thinning feathers, a chipped beak, and weak rheumy eyes. It perches on the rock and gazes intelligently at you.

Creature: This ancient sea gull is Virgil, formerly the familiar of Archais, Firewatch Island's wizard. Virgil survived the slaughter of the garrison years ago and has since lived on the island, nesting in the wizard's tower room all these years. He has avoided the hermitage residents and was largely ignored by all of them save Tallos (the half-mad druid once tried to befriend Virgil). Not trusting the imbalanced druid, Virgil wisely avoided him. Virgil fled the island the previous night

when the drowned ones attacked, but now that the PCs have apparently defeated them the sea gull has returned to its home.

Virgil, Sea Gull Ex-Familiar: CR —; Small magical beast; HD 1/2d8; hp 3; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d3–3, bite); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ improved evasion; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 4, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B].

Development: Virgil continues to watch the PCs from nearby. Attempts to shoo him away result in a temporary retreat, but he soon returns and resumes his vigil. The ex-familiar has observed the characters' actions against the drowned ones and believes they might be just the ones to finish Archais's work and reseal Dagon's Maw. If a character casts *speak with animals*, Virgil is friendly and relates the events of the Adventure Background to them to the best of his knowledge. He does not know the specifics about the *Tammeraut's* crew or the captain's identity or current status, but does know that the drowned ones are victims of that fateful sinking. He speculates that the seals in Dagon's Maw were reopened when the ship sank and the escaping energies spawned the undead. Virgil encourages the characters to travel to the shipwreck and reseal the rift to prevent further undead attacks. If they agree to do so, Virgil reveals the location of Archais's old magic cache in area 22.

If the characters lack the ability to *speak with animals*, Virgil instead tries to lure them up to Archais's cache of magic in hopes that they find and read his journal and take it upon themselves to re-seal Dagon's Maw.

DAGON'S MAW

If the characters decide to seek out the sunken *Tammeraut* and Dagon's Maw, they must first find out where the rift is located. The charts in Archais' journal give the exact location in nautical coordinates. A character who makes a successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (geography) check (DC 30) also knows the location of the rift. Dagon's Maw itself is located about 5 miles from Firewatch Island. Locating the Rift from the surface first requires a successful Knowledge (geography) or Profession (sailor) check (DC 15). Each check requires about an hour rowing or sailing, and the success of the check does not become apparent until the sea floor is examined. Virgil knows the location of Dagon's Maw, having accompanied Archais to the location several times many years ago, and can serve as a guide to the proper location.

The bay itself is about 300 feet deep here, and unless the PCs had the foresight to bring along a lot of rope they won't be able to anchor here. Archais used an *immovable rod* as an anchor on his expeditions; this is the same *rod* that is currently hidden in area 22.

Be sure to study the rules for underwater movement and combat before running this part of the adventure. These rules

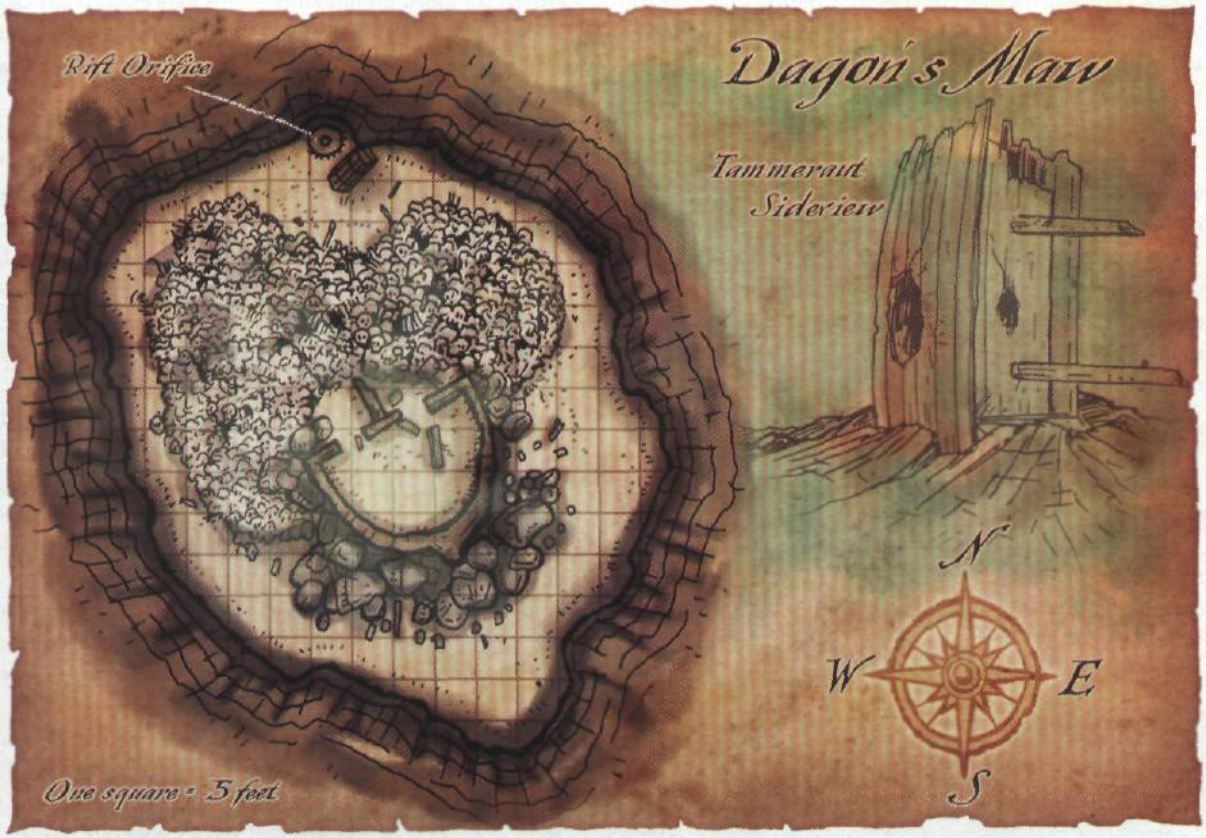
DAGON'S MAW

No one knows for certain the source of the evil permeating the rift known as Dagon's Maw. Scholars have speculated it to be a dormant portal to the Lower Planes that once allowed evil outsiders to access the sea floor. If you've run "The Stink" (*Dungeon* #105), this portal could lead to Incabulos' realm, and may be the same portal the Deep Mother recently led her minions through—a fight with the drowned ones could easily explain the losses the fiendish locathahs suffered before they ventured to the city of Suncliff. In this case, consider placing the Stink in the towns of Shantadern or Nessermouth, and use both adventures as the background of a mini-campaign set on Nyrond's Relmor coast.

Other scholars believe that a more sinister source of evil lurks below the rift; an evil trapped eons ago beneath the bedrock of the sea by the gods themselves. These scholars believe that Dagon's Maw provides an outlet for this unknown being's evil to slowly ooze through to the outside world; a sort of pressure valve to prevent the evil below from becoming too potent in its quiescence.

Whatever the source, for thousands of years evil aquatic creatures have used the Maw as a focal point for their power and have made countless sacrificial offerings to feed its essence.

Three centuries ago, a powerful alliance of sea elf tribes banded together to destroy a gathering army of sahuagin led by a fiendish kraken that had made the Maw its lair. During the momentous battle, the sea elves collapsed the rift in upon itself and buried most of the sahuagin. The kraken itself was slain only at the cost of some of the elves' most powerful heroes. In the end, all that remained of the rift was a shallow crater that the elves sealed over with stone and protective wards. When the *Tammeraut* broke up and sank, its stern punctured this stone cap and protruded into the hollow below, destroying the wards that kept the evil influence of the rift in check. Since that time, the evil has slowly seeped into the surrounding region, but thus far, the crew of the *Tammeraut* are its only victims.



appear on pages 92–93 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Additionally, the water pressure at this depth poses an additional danger; refer to page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on pressure damage.

THE WRECK OF THE *TAMMERAUT*

When the characters reach the sea floor and approach Dagon's Maw, read the following description.

> The rotting skeleton of a war galley's stern looms out of the sea floor ahead. It appears that the sinking ship broke in half at some point during its descent. The bow section is completely missing, but the aft section plunged into the floor of the sea like an arrow into the earth. The sandy bed around the wreckage is scattered with encrusted and partially buried bones and debris. The water around the shipwreck seems unnaturally cold, and the curious schools of fish that swarmed in the waters above are conspicuously absent.
>
> A single faded word runs along the side of the ruined ship, its letters just barely discernable...*Tammeraut*.

Dagon's Maw is an ancient site that far predates the sinking of the *Tammeraut*. The history of this ancient site is summarized in the "Dagon's Maw" sidebar. The evil energies seeping from the Maw have suffused a 300-foot-radius area with the effects of a permanent *unhallow* spell. The area has a constant *magic circle against good*, and all turn undead checks suffer a –4 penalty and all rebuke undead checks gain a +4 bonus. Unlike the typical *unhallow* spell, there are no additional spell effects tied to the site. This effect cannot be *dispelled*; only the resealing of the Maw ends it.

A successful Search check (DC 25) made on the sea floor near the ship reveals that a clearly artificial slab of stone covered with ancient runes sits on the sea floor here, covered by a few feet of loose muck and ooze. A successful Spellcraft check (DC 25) identifies the stone slab as the product of several *wall of stone* spells. The runes themselves are in elven, and if enough of the silt can be cleared (a job requiring several hours of work) a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) by someone who can read the runes reveals that they are intended as a warning to avoid the region and what lies below.

INSIDE THE SHIP (EL 8)

> The interior of the sunken ship is a complete ruin. The individual decks have all but collapsed, forming a tangled maze of ooze and muck that clings to the sundered timbers and beams. An odd, many-colored light pulsates randomly deep in the depths of the ship.

Numerous breaches in the hull and openings on the rowing decks allow entry into the ruined ship. Alternately, one could

simply swim into the ship's interior from the top where the bow is missing. The rotten tangle of timbers and bulkheads inside are weak after so many years underwater, and can be moved through with relative ease (although the interior of the ship counts as difficult terrain for movement costs).

A large hole at the stern of the wreck allows easy access to the darkened cavern below the slabs of stone. This cavern is all that now remains of Dagon's Maw.

Creatures: As the characters enter the wreck, the remaining drowned ones who stayed behind from the most recent assault on Firewatch take notice. These drowned ones lurk inside the ruined *Tammeraut*, and attack as soon as the PCs enter. They do not pursue beyond the 100-yard radius of the *unhallow* effect.

Drowned One Fighters, Human Ftr1 (5): hp 7 each; see "Death from the Briny Deep" above for full statistics.

Drowned One Monks, Human Mnk4 (2): hp 26 each; see the Appendix for full stats.

Ad–Hoc XP Award: Due to the difficulties imposed by the *unhallow* effect, award an additional 10% XP for defeating these drowned ones.

THE RIFT (EL 10)

A strange pulsating light composed of many odd colors permeates this underwater cavern. The stern of the ship has broken through the cavern's 15-foot-high ceiling near the center of the chamber. The nauseating light reveals a hideous array of piled bones, many of which clearly once belonged to humanoids. There are far more bones here than could be accounted for by the crew of a single sunken ship. On the north wall is a shallow alcove, and within it a funnel-shaped hollow in the floor terminates in a narrow hole in the bedrock below. The pulsing light emanates from this hole, and an almost palpable feeling of ancient evil flows through the chamber on a gentle current.

This cavern is all that remains of what was once a jagged chasm in the sea floor. The mound of bones are from the crew of the *Tammeraut* as well as the sahuagin and their minions from the ancient war. The tiny opening to the north is the actual opening to the ancient evil that has imbued the Maw with its sinister aura.

Creature: Trapped in this chamber is all that remains of the *Tammeraut's* captain, Syrgaul Tammeraut, now a ghost. Syrgaul is the conduit through which the Maw has once again unleashed its influence. Feeding off his rage and hate as he died, it animated his crew into drowned ones. Although the drowned ones may range abroad, Syrgaul himself is forever trapped within the Maw near the source of his dark unlife.

His appearance is that of a red-garbed sorcerer with knotted chest muscles visible through his sleeveless robe, open above the waist. His long, white hair and beard flow about him wildly, as if caught in a constant current. Numerous gold rings adorn his ears, and his face is twisted into a perpetual sneer of condescension. Tattooed prominently on his bare chest is the red shuriken of the Scarlet Brotherhood. He appears hale and hearty save for a touch of desperate madness in his eyes and a slight transparency about his entire being.

Syrgaul Tammeraut, Ghost Ftr5/Sor3: CR 10; Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal); HD 8d12; hp 59; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee touch (1d4 ability points from an ability selected by Syrgaul, draining touch); SA arcane spells, draining touch, manifestation, telekinesis; SQ +4 turn resistance, rejuvenation, soulsense; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 23.

Soulsense (Su): Syrgaul possesses soulsense as a drowned one, save that the range of this ability extends to the limits of the *unhallow* effect that surrounds Dagon's Maw. Additionally, his pure hatred for the clergy of Procan has enhanced this ability, allowing him to sense intelligent living creatures who venerate Procan at a range of 5 miles.

Skills: Concentration +5, Diplomacy +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +12, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +10, Spellcraft +9, Spot +12, Swim +8.

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Craft Wand, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Abyssal, Common, Infernal.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7; base DC = 16 + spell level): 0—*daze, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, shocking grasp*.

Possessions: *Cloak of charisma +2, wand of phantasmal killer* (11 charges).

Tactics: Because Syrgaul is incorporeal, he suffers none of the restrictions for underwater combat or movement. He does, of course, retain all of the benefits of the *unhallow* effect. Syrgaul senses the characters once they enter the area of the *unhallow* effect. When the characters enter the rift, Syrgaul is already hiding under the pile of bones. He prepares for combat by casting *mage armor*. He then attempts to attack from the concealment of the bones with a *shocking grasp* combined with his draining touch (which he typically uses to drain Constitution).

Treasure: The treasures of the *Tammeraut* have been placed before the opening to the north by the drowned ones as an offering to the great sleeping evil. The loot is kept in a rotten sea chest and includes 10,220 sp, 2,950 gp, 45 pp, six gems worth 300 gp each, a *+2 mithral chain shirt*, and a *+1 mighty cleaving greatsword*. Syrgaul's cloak and wand can be found here, as well.

Development: The funnel-shaped hollow to the north is 3 feet in diameter and descends 2 feet to a small vent. This opening is 1 inch in diameter and is the source of the strange pulsating light and the *unhallow* effect. The tiny opening itself descends for hundreds of feet without widening into the depths below. The forgotten architects of this opening left it as a pressure valve of sorts to allow the evil within to slowly seep out rather than accumulate and gain power over time. The elves

further sealed the opening by enclosing it below a magically warded cover. The sinking *Tammeraut* broke these wards, and the slumbering evil is once again spreading.

Sealing off this opening is the only way to lay Syrgaul's spirit to rest. It also prevents the evil from further corrupting those who drown in the area. The easiest method of sealing it is to use the flask of *sovereign glue* from the hermitage to affix a plug over the opening. The substance hardens even underwater, and effectively closes off the vent, at least until someone comes along with some *universal solvent*. Any number of spells, such as *stone shape* or *wall of stone* can also effectively seal off the vent. If the vent is sealed, the *unhallow* effect immediately ends.

Of course, sealing the vent may have repercussions in the future, as detailed in "Concluding the Adventure."

Ad–Hoc XP Award: Due to the influence of the *unhallow* effect, award an additional 10% XP for defeating Syrgaul.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

"Tammeraut's Fate" is somewhat unusual in that it doesn't have an obvious ending. The PCs are free to leave Firewatch Island at any time (as long as they have the means to do so, of course). At the same time, they may take it upon themselves to see to the rescue of the surviving hermits, to destroy the drowned ones and their ghostly leader, and even to seal the opening in Dagon's Maw.

If the PCs escape Firewatch Island before nightfall, the drowned ones continue to pose a menace. Now that they've been reawakened, any drowned ones that survive eventually make it to the mainland in their nightly wanderings. Attacks on coastal roads and villages slowly build as they add more of their victims to their ranks.

If the characters destroyed the drowned ones but failed to close the rift, Syrgaul slowly begins to extend his evil influence outward, transforming the drowned of Relmor Bay into undead one at a time until he has created an army of the drowned. What terrible atrocities he visits upon the surrounding coastlines are up to you.

On the other hand, if the PCs seal the opening in Dagon's Maw, things return to normal on Firewatch and in the Bay. The surviving hermits abandon the island, but before long some new group settles there. Perhaps Feldrin Kane, King Lynwerd's agent in Uskarn, deeds the island and outpost to the party as a reward for ending the drowned one menace, with the stipulation that they must defend the kingdom's coast in that area from sea invaders.

Dagon's Maw itself continues to be a threat, in any case. Sealing it only allows the evil beyond to fester and build strength; eventually it breaks free, even stronger than before. Perhaps a powerful sahuagin cleric comes to the Maw and unseals it to resurrect the army that was buried alive in the chasm by the elves centuries before. Above all the question still remains of what exactly is the source of the rift's evil. It's possible a high-level party could magically descend down the rift's tiny orifice to find out what evil presence is down there and determine if it can be destroyed once and for all.

APPENDIX: DROWNED ONE

Drowned ones are the animated corpses of land-dwelling creatures who died at sea. They are animated by the will of Nerull the Reaper or other cruel and evil deities.

Drowned ones are free-willed, but overwhelmed with a terrible hatred of the living. Their attacks often show surprising cunning. They prefer to drag their victims into the water before finishing them off, but if this isn't possible they aren't above shambling onto land to conduct slaughter.

A drowned one looks like a waterlogged, lumbering mockery of what it was in life. Flesh is ripe and bloated with moisture, and in many cases covered with tiny fish bites and wounds from crabs and other scavengers. Their clothing remains soaked and draped with seaweed at all times.

SAMPLE DROWNED ONE

This once-human figure stinks of rot and drips with foul sea water. Crabs skitter in the sodden folds of its tattered clothes, and sea slugs and other writhing aquatic life coil in its mouth and empty eye sockets.

This example uses a 4th-level human monk as the base creature.

Drowned One, 4th–Level Human Monk
Medium Undead (Augmented Humanoid, Water)
Hit Dice: 4d12 (26 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 20 ft., swim 40 ft.
Armor Class: 20, touch 15, flat-footed 19
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+7
Attack: Unarmed strike +8 melee (1d8+4 plus disease)
Full Attack: Unarmed strike +6/+6 melee (1d8+4 plus disease)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Disease, *ki* strike (magic), nauseating appearance
Special Qualities: +4 turn resistance, deep water adaptation, electrical vulnerability, evasion, hivemind, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire 10, soulsense, slow fall 20 ft., still mind, sunlight powerlessness
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 12, Con —, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 8
Skills: Balance +3, Hide +10, Jump +0, Knowledge (religion) +4, Move Silently +10, Profession (sailor) +7, Swim +24, Tumble +8
Feats: Deflect Arrows, Improved Initiative, Stealthy, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)
Environment: Any water or coastal
Organization: Solitary or crew (6–24)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

COMBAT

The fortitude saves for this drowned one's disease and nauseating appearance have a DC of 11.

Possessions: Bracers of armor +1, ring of swimming.

CREATING A DROWNED ONE

"Drowned one" is a template that can be added to any living creature that does not possess the aquatic subtype. The creature's type changes to undead, and it gains the water subtype. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12.

Speed: The creature's land speed is reduced by half, and it gains a swim speed equal to the creature's original land speed. If the creature already has a swim speed, it increases by +10 ft.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is designed for a party of four 6th-level characters. It can be adjusted for higher- or lower-level characters by making a few modifications to the text.

4th- to 5th-level PCs

PCs of these levels should be greatly challenged by the adventure. Since there isn't much time to rest and recover before the drowned ones strike, you should increase the numbers of *potions of healing* and similar restorative magic. Increase Janore's level to 5th and give her a more active roll in the hermitage's defense; she'll be able to cure the other two survivors' diseases as well, so they'll be able to help out more. Reduce the number of drowned one fighters by half, reduce the drowned one monks to 2nd level, and reduce the drowned one assassin to a 5th-level rogue. Specific changes to encounters are as follows:

- **The Road to Uskarn**: Reduce the number of harpies encountered to two.
- **Area 3**: Reduce the number of sea hags encountered to one.
- **Area 11**: Reduce the number of rat swarms to two.
- **Area 14**: Replace the chuul with a sea cat.
- **Area 18**: Replace the Huge snakes with Large snakes.
- **Area 24**: Replace the Large peryton with a standard peryton.
- **Dagon's Maw**: Underwater encounters are inherently more difficult than standard encounters; rather than adjust the encounter for a 3rd- or 4th-level party, you might wish to save this set of encounters for later in the campaign. If you do wish to run this encounter, you should remove the *unhallow* effect and reduce Syrgaul's levels to Ftr4/Sor2.

7th- to 8th-level PCs

PCs of these levels will be better equipped to face the dangers of this adventure. Allow less time between the exploration of the hermitage and the drowned one attack to reduce opportunities to prepare defenses. Increase the drowned one fighters to 2nd level, the drowned one monks to 5th level, and the drowned one assassin to a Rog5/Asn4. You can also remove some or all of the helpful aquatic magic items (the *helm of underwater action*, the *pressure capsules*, and the *folding boat*) to make the PCs rely more on their own magic and skills. Specific changes to encounters are as follows:

- **The Road to Uskarn**: Increase the number of harpies encountered to four.
- **Area 3**: Give each of the sea hags two levels of rogue.
- **Area 11**: Replace rat swarms with centipede swarms.
- **Area 14**: Increase the number of chuuls encountered to two.
- **Area 18**: Increase the number of Huge snakes encountered to three.
- **Dagon's Maw**: Add a second drowned one assassin to the group of drowned ones, and increase Syrgaul's level to Ftr5/Sor5. Alternately, if you have access to *Savage Species*, you could add a ghost brute giant octopus (with the slavering doom special attack applied to its tentacle attacks) to the final encounter.

AC: The base creature's natural armor improves by +4. Drowned ones continue to wear the armor they were wearing when they died. Magic armor is unaltered, but regular armor is badly rusted or otherwise rotted and water damaged, and the armor bonus provided is reduced by one point.

Attacks: A drowned one retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a slam attack if it didn't already have one. A drowned one that carried a weapon when it died continues to use that weapon as a drowned one unless its slam attack does more damage.

Damage: Drowned ones' weapons are often badly rusted or otherwise damaged by their long immersion. These weapons inflict damage as if they were one size category smaller than their actual size.

Drowned ones also have slam attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the damage values given in the table below. Creatures with natural attacks retain their old damage ratings or use the values below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage
Fine/Diminutive	1
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	2d8

Special Attacks: A drowned one retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains those given below. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the drowned one's HD + the drowned one's Charisma modifier, unless noted otherwise.

Disease (Su): Drowned ones constantly seep rivulets of foul sea water. This water soaks their weapons and natural attacks, so that anyone damaged by a drowned one must make a Fortitude save or contract bluerot. Victims of this supernatural disease grow lethargic and feeble as their muscles and skin turn blue, like the skin of a drowned corpse. Bluerot has an incubation period of 1 minute and deals 1d8 points of Strength damage; if a victim has a Strength score of 0, the disease instead inflicts 1d8 points of Constitution damage. Bluerot is spread only by drowned ones. An afflicted living non-aquatic creature that dies of bluerot rises as a drowned one at the next sunset.

Nauseating Appearance (Su): A drowned one's visage is supernaturally disgusting and horrifying. All living creatures within 20 feet of a drowned one that can see it must make a successful Fortitude saving throw or become nauseated for one round. A new saving throw is required each round the victim remains within 20 feet and can see the drowned one. A character can avoid this effect by averting his eyes or wearing a blindfold, but doing so grants the drowned one concealment or total concealment (see page 309 of the *Monster Manual*).

Special Qualities: A drowned one retains all the special qualities of the base creature and those given below.

Deep Water Adaptation (Ex): Drowned ones are immune to water pressure damage from deep water.

Electrical Vulnerability (Ex): Drowned ones take half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from electrical damage.

Hivemind (Ex): Drowned ones can communicate telepathically with other drowned ones, to a distance of 10 miles.

Resistance to Cold and Fire (Ex): Drowned ones gain cold resistance 10 and fire resistance 10.

Soulsense (Su): Drowned ones constantly sense the presence of intelligent life in a 60-foot cone-shaped emanation. This ability functions identically to the spell *detect undead*, save that it allows the drowned one to detect the auras of living creatures with Intelligence scores of at least 3.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Drowned ones are powerless in natural sunlight, unless the sunlight is filtered through at least 1 foot of water. They flee from direct sunlight; a drowned one caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move action in a round.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Drowned ones have +4 turn resistance.

Abilities: Adjust from the base creature as follows: Str +6, Dex –4 (minimum score of 3), Wis +4. As undead creatures, drowned ones have no Constitution score.

Skills: Drowned ones receive a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks.

Feats: Drowned ones gain Blind-Fight if the base creature doesn't already have this feat.

Environment: Any water or coastal

Organization: Solitary or crew (6–24)

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1

Treasure: As base creature but no potions or scrolls

Alignment: Always chaotic evil. A character who becomes a drowned one becomes chaotic evil. If a cleric becomes evil, he loses any ability to turn undead, but gains the ability to rebuke undead. If a cleric's new alignment precludes him from worshipping the same deity, he may select new domains from the following list: Death, Destruction, Evil, War.

Advancement: Same as base creature

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +3 Ω

Greg Vaughan lives in Oklahoma City, and this is his first appearance in Dungeon. *He'd like to thank his playtesters: James, Harvey, Tall James, Joe, and Kyle, along with Brian and the guys at Game HQ for all their help. Most of all he'd like to thank his wife and their two little girls for putting up with his frequent disappearances to the "Computer Triangle" while he hacked away at the keyboard.*

DANTALION

DARK CHAMPION OF THE SWORD LORD

BY THE DUNGEON STAFF

ARTWORK BY PETER BERGTING

As a minor noble in the Hold of the Sea Princes, Dantalion Vance trained from early childhood in the ways of the blade. He sought martial perfection by dedicating his life to the teachings of Kelanen, a minor god of swordplay favored by fighters throughout the Flanaess. In his religious studies, he learned of the *swords of answering*, nine blades sacred to the doctrine of the Sword Lord. Kelanen himself had scattered the nine blades throughout the Flanaess, teaching that each belonged to the warrior who could win and keep it by trial of combat.

Dantalion made tracking down and winning a *sword of answering* his life's work. He finally located one, the bastard sword *Scather*, in the possession of a black-hearted captain in the army of Sterich. As that nation's citizens fled eastward after an invasion by giants and savage humanoids during the recent Greyhawk Wars, Dantalion cornered the sword's wielder, defeating him in an hour-long duel on the ramparts of a burning castle. His enemy slain, Dantalion reached for his prize.

Although Kelanen himself required philosophical balance in his worshippers, each *sword of answering* corresponded to a different ideology, and functioned only in the hands of a warrior dedicated to that ethos. *Scather* required an evil wielder, and wounded Dantalion as he grasped its handle. If the the swordsman could not change the blade he had sought all his life, he figured, he could change *himself*. Dantalion began hunting down self-proclaimed "master swordsmen," defeating them with a gleeful flourish and slaying them outright for their failure. In time, *Scather* came to appreciate its newest wielder.

Dantalion, Male Human Clr5 (Kelanen)/Ftr10: CR 15; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d10+5d8+30; hp 100; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +13; Grp +20; Atk +25 melee (1d10+12/17–20, *Scather*); Full Atk +25/+20/+15 melee (1d10+12/17–20, *Scather*); SA rebuke/command undead, spells; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 24, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Appraise +2 (+4 weapons), Concentration +12, Craft (weaponsmith) +20, Intimidate +17, Jump +24, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Survival +9.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Quick Draw, Track, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Focus (longsword)[B], Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Languages: Common, Elven, Infernal.

Spells Prepared (5/4+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 11 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, guidance* (2), *mending, virtue*; 1st—*bless, comprehend languages, cure light wounds* (2), *longstrider**; 2nd—*bear's endurance, cat's grace, spiritual weapon**; 3rd—*fly**, *speak with dead.*

*Domain spell. Domains: Travel (*freedom of movement* up to 5 rounds/day, Survival is a class skill), War (proficiency and Weapon Focus with longsword).

Possessions: Scather, +3 glamered mithril breastplate, amulet of natural armor +1, belt of giant strength +4, boots of levitation, Heward's handy haversack, ring of protection +2, wand of divine favor (CL 15, 25 charges), *eyes of darkvision* (identical to *goggles of night*), 4 *potions of cure moderate wounds.*

TACTICS

Dantalion avoids spur of the moment combats; he prefers to challenge those who claim to be excellent swordfighters to one-on-one duels to determine who has the better techniques. His one constant demand in a duel is that there is proper time to offer prayers to Kelanen before the duel; of course, he uses this "prayer time" to augment his skills with magic by casting several spells in the following order: *longstrider, bear's endurance, cat's grace, bless,* and *divine favor* (from his wand). In combat, he uses Combat Expertise to full effect, raising his Armor Class by 5. After Dantalion wins a duel, he uses *speak with dead* on the vanquished enemy to find out who trained him in swordplay, so that he can challenge the teacher to a duel as well.

When fully enhanced by the five spells mentioned above and Combat Expertise, Dantalion's combat statistics are as follows: HD 10d10+5d8+60; hp 130; Init +10; Spd 40 ft.; AC 31, touch 22, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +13; Grp +20; Atk +26 melee (1d10+17/17–20, *Scather*); Full Atk +26/+21/+16 melee (1d10+17/17–20, *Scather*); SA rebuke/command undead, spells; AL NE; SV Fort +15, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 24, Dex 22, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 8.

DEVELOPMENT

Dantalion makes the perfect adversary for a cocky sword-wielding player character. He travels the fighting societies of the Flanaess (or your campaign world), listening for tales of new champions to challenge. While he first presents himself as a noble duelist simply out to test his skills, most of his battles end in merciless bloodshed. Dantalion has no greater admirer than himself, and often peppers his dueling banter with observations regarding his own triumphs and the failures of his many dead opponents.

An encounter with Dantalion might set the PCs on the hunt for their own *sword of answering*. Tracking down such a valuable relic should be the focus of several adventures of play. Use the statistics for *Scather*, or create a similar weapon with minor powers that match the blade's alignment. Ω

SCATHER, SWORD OF ANSWERING (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Scather is one of the nine *swords of answering*, powerful magic bastard swords created by Kelanen to represent the nine sacred styles of swordplay, each of which corresponds to one of the nine alignments. Each of the swords has a different-colored 10,000-gp gem set in its pommel.

All of the *swords of answering* have a unique alignment; *Scather* is neutral evil. A character who's alignment matches neither of a *sword of answering's* alignment components takes 1d6 points of damage per round the sword is wielded, and must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 25) each round or be stunned for 1d10 rounds. A character whose alignment matches one of a *sword of answering's* alignment components takes only 1d3 points of damage per round and must make a successful Fortitude saving throw each round (DC 25) or become nauseated.

A character whose alignment matches the *sword's* can wield it without worry. A *sword of answering* is a *+3 keen bastard sword.* On a successful critical hit, the *sword's* enhancement bonus increases to +4, and it does an additional 2d6 points of damage.

The wielder of a sword of answering can make an attack of opportunity against any creature that successfully damages him with a weapon, as long as the target is in reach and the attack of opportunity is made with the *sword of answering.* This ability does not increase the number of attacks of opportunity a character can make in a round.

Known names of other *swords of answering* include *Answerer* (LG, location unknown), *Back-talker* (NG, lost in the depths of White Plume Mountain), *Concluder* (CG, wielded by Fasstal Dothmar, Royal Consort of Queen Yolande), *Last-quip* (LN, lost near Irongate at the Battle of a Thousand Banners), *Rebutter* (N, wielded by Lord Eraj, servant of Mordenkainen), *Replier* (CN, lost in the Bandit Kingdoms during the Greyhawk Wars), *Retorter* (LE, trapped in the treasure ward of the Overking's Palace in Rauxes), and *Squelcher* (CE, location unknown).

There exists a tenth *sword of answering* as well; *Fragarach.* Kelanen stole this sword from an alien god and used it as the template to create the nine, and then allowed the legendary sword to pass into the hands of his mortal worshippers. *Fragarach's* powers are rumored to be even greater than the nine *swords of answering*, but its current location and owner are unknown.

PIRATE SEA CAVE STRONGHOLD

KEY

1 Defensive Ballista
2 Lookout Posts
3 Beach Entrance
4 Guard Room
5 Prison Cells
6 Sleeping Quarters
7 Gathering Hall
8 Kitchen Nook
9 Captain's Quarters
10 Boat Landing
11 Natural Dock
12 Pirate Ship
13 Trapped Crossing
14 Tide Pool & Elemental Guardian
15 Underwater Tunnel
16 Loot Storage
17 Treasure Chamber
18 Unfinished Boat
19 Workshop Area
20 Shipwrights' Quarters
21 Secret Cave
22 Weighted Rope Bridge*

*Can be lowered to sea floor when ships use the channel.

Arrows = Up
1 square = 10 feet
WEST
11
12
13
17
SECRET
HARBOR
14
15
16
SHIPYARD
CAVE
22
18
21
19
15
20
2

ANY SETTING

HIGH LEVEL

LEVELS 11+

DUNGEON CRAWL

THE BLACK EGG

BY STEVEN MONTANO

ARTWORK BY JOY ANG, ANDREW HOU & ARNOLD TSANG
CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

The screams were drowned out by the sound of the terrible falling star—a black orb of malign energy hurled from the firmament in the dead of night. In that instant, the village of Rhale was utterly destroyed, reduced to a hollow crater of flaming decay. Few survived to report the terrible event. Now, frightened whispers and exaggerated rumors spread word of the cataclysm. Anxious talk of a dark presence descended from above has taken root, though none can put name to the faceless fear that might reside inside this terrible orb.

"The Black Egg" is an adventure suitable for four 12th-level characters. Notes on how to adjust the adventure for parties of lower or higher level are provided in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar below.

This adventure may be placed in any existing campaign world with a minimum of difficulty. The village of Rhale (or, more accurately, its remains) should be placed somewhere on the rim of civilization where the PCs can be in a position to be the first to investigate its destruction.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Zebedaster Frost was once a good-hearted man—no one ever envisioned the maniac he would become. A powerful wizard and supporter of his government and people, Frost made the mistake of acquiring an artifact called the *Black Egg*, a dark orb of power rumored to have been carved from the body of a hellfire wyrm that had been transmuted into iron. Possession of the artifact drove him mad. In addition to delusions of godhood, he was overtaken by a deep paranoia that all of his former friends were plotting to steal the Egg away from him. As a result, he turned on them, murdering not only his former adventuring companions but their families and acquaintances as well. Frost was soon thereafter captured and committed to an asylum so that his mind could heal. But those who saw what Zebedaster Frost had become believed that this could never happen—that the *Black Egg* had blackened his soul and poisoned his mind. They were right.

Before his imprisonment, Frost managed to seal the *Black Egg* in a powerful reliquary called the Fane of Scales, a sphere of black iron infused with dread energies and layered with deadly magical defenses. Frost then set the Fane of Scales adrift in the heavens above, far beyond the reach of his enemies, but not beyond his own.

The Black Covenant, an order of nihilistic dragon-hearted beings bound together by their desire to destroy humanity, recently uncovered the location of the Fane of Scales. They wish to enter the Fane and retrieve the *Black Egg*, which they plan to use to unleash an army of fiendish dragons upon the world. With the assistance of a mysterious benefactor and a *rod of cancellation*, one of their number used magic to fly up to the Fane and disjoin the spell that held it in place so high above the ground. The resulting blast of energy slew the member of the Black Covenant, and the Fane itself fell toward the ground far below—obliterating the village of Rhale.

The mysterious benefactor is in fact Tobias Frost, son of the insane Zebedaster, who made the location of the Fane of Scales available to the Covenant. The *Black Egg*'s insidious curse tainted Zebedaster's entire family line, and as each member of the Frost family perished, the curse gathered strength in the surviving kin. Today, Tobias Frost is the last, and his mind has been completely overwhelmed with a need for the *Black Egg*. Tobias knows where the Fane is, and knew that *Mordenkainen's disjunction* (or a *rod of cancellation*) was required to bring the Fane's orbit to an end, but he also knew that the fool to accomplish this task would be instantly incinerated in the resulting blast of power. He kept this key bit of information from the Black Covenant, of course, when he told them how to access the Fane.

Yet even when the Black Covenant brings down the Fane, Tobias is not done with them. He intends to let them enter the Fane before he follows, so that they may trigger the various traps and defenses that Zebedaster left behind. Finally, Tobias knows that the key to the *Black Egg*'s power are the souls of dragon kin. Tobias plans to lure the Covenant into the Fane, and with the aid of a powerful artifact called the *blood claw*, he intends to harvest their souls to feed the *Black Egg*'s hunger. Were Tobias sane, he might realize that he and the Covenant shared the same agenda, but his thoughts are consumed by the Egg and his own needs.

To aid him in his quest to grant strength to the *Black Egg*, Tobias has enlisted the aid of several powerful mercenaries. These mercenaries suspect that Tobias has unspoken plans, but their own desires make them the perfect accomplices. With unwitting allies in the form of the mercenaries and the Black Covenant itself, Tobias is sure that he shall soon have the powers of the *Black Egg* for his own.

For it is ready to hatch.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

While traveling in the countryside, the player characters witness an explosive event—the falling of a meteor into a distant hillside. Soon thereafter, they encounter several mercenaries menacing some refugees. From them, the PCs can learn that a group of dragon worshippers called the Black Covenant are in the area and intend to use the fallen star for their own nefarious purposes. They may also ally themselves with Tobias Frost, a mercenary and bounty hunter who claims to be seeking the deaths of the Black Covenant half-dragons.

Upon arriving at the crater, the PCs find that the falling star is in fact a massive sphere of iron with an opening in its side. They enter the sphere to find a small complex of rooms protected by numerous traps and guardians. They also battle several members of the Black Covenant, until finally they make their way to the heart of the complex, where they discover the source of the Covenant's interest the *Black Egg*. At this point, Tobias Frost reveals his true motives and tries to use the *Black Egg* to create a half-fiend red dragon. The characters must destroy the *Black Egg* or Tobias if they wish to prevent the creation of an army of fiendish dragons.

THE BLACK STAR

As the adventure begins, the characters should be traveling somewhere in the vicinity of Rhale, perhaps after returning from a different adventure or maybe as they make their way to a new city. There are several trade routes in the area, so perhaps they have agreed to escort a merchant through the region.

Whatever the reason for their journey, this adventure begins as the PCs witness the descent of the Fane of Scales and the destruction of Rhale. The village of Rhale is a frontier town, many miles removed from civilization and located in an area dominated by wind-swept grass, rolling hills, and frequent steppes. As a result, travelers have a clear, unobstructed view of the terror to come.

Late in the evening, perhaps as the PCs are preparing to camp, read the following text.

> Far off in the night sky—it's difficult to determine exactly how far—you catch sight of a shooting star, but something about it isn't right. While a small stream of shimmering light trails its descent, the star itself is so dark that it stands out against the already darkening night sky, a rip of midnight trailed by fire. Its descent seems to gather speed as you watch, and its writhing wake of light grows more and more brilliant. Only a few moments later, the star's fall comes to its inexorable end.
>
> For a brief moment, there is only blinding light. A blast of white and red pulses outward as a distant hillside is engulfed in a ball of terrible fire. As the hill itself seems to bloom and rise like a malignant mushroom of fire, a few moments of eerie silence dominate the plains. Then, a terrible blast of sound tears the night apart and the ground roils and trembles with a deafening roar that would drown out a dozen thunderstorms.

A successful Survival check (DC 15) determines that the "star" landed about 25 miles to the north. You can adjust this distance somewhat to provide more of a challenge to the adventure (see "The Explosion" below) but keep in mind that the closer the PCs are to ground zero, the better chance they stand of being killed by the explosion.

THE EXPLOSION

The explosive shockwave of the Fane's impact is incredibly destructive. Damage caused by the explosion is a combination of several forms of damage (including fire, sonic, and physical damage). Most objects and creatures in close proximity to ground zero are destroyed, but damage values are given nevertheless so you can see what happens when characters are subjected to such forces. In fact, these conditions are actually quite mild, considering the size of the Fane of Scales. The failing magic that kept it in orbit helped somewhat to slow its fall; an actual falling object of the Fane's size would have devastated life on a much larger scale. As it is, the explosion creates a mushroom-shaped cloud nearly a dozen miles high.

All objects and creatures within range of the impact must make a Fortitude save and a Reflex saving throw. The DCs and effects of the saving throws vary, depending on the distance of the creature or object from ground zero. The effects of the explosion expand outward at a rate of approximately one mile per round. Thus, a creature 7 miles away from ground zero wouldn't need to make any saving throws until seven rounds after the initial explosion.

Ground Zero to 1 Mile (instantaneous): Disintegration (Fortitude DC 40 negates); 40d6 damage plus 40d6 fire damage plus 40d6 sonic damage (Reflex DC 40 half).

1 to 5 Miles: Shockwave is equivalent to tornado-force winds (see DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide* page 95); 38d6 damage plus 38d6 fire damage plus 38d6 sonic damage at one mile (Reflex save DC 39 half), Each additional mile (or fraction thereof) reduces each of these damage types by 2d6 and the Reflex save by –1. Thus, at 5 miles, the damage is 30d6 for all three types and the Reflex save is DC 35.

5 to 15 Miles: Shockwave reduces in power to hurricane-force winds; damage continues to drop by 2d6 per mile, and the save DC decreases by 1 per mile. At 15 miles, damage from all three types is 10d6 each and the Reflex save is DC 25.

15 to 25 Miles: Shockwave reduces in power to windstorm-force winds; damage continues to drop by 2d6 per mile and –1 to DC per mile. At 20 miles, damage from all three types reaches its minimum rating of 1d6 per type.

25 or more Miles: Shockwave reduces in power by one category (from windstorm to severe to strong to moderate to light to nothing) at 25 miles and again every 5 miles thereafter; no damage at more than 25 miles.

REPERCUSSIONS

What was once a thriving village is now a smoldering crater with a diameter of a little less than a mile. The crater itself is about 650 feet deep, and it and the surrounding terrain are subject to several inhospitable conditions for some time after the impact event.

The crater's walls slope downward at an extremely steep angle to its lowest reaches. The steep slopes on the inside of the crater's walls are uneven surfaces and prone to crumbling. A successful Climb check (DC 20) is required to navigate them for the first 200 feet; this DC drops to DC 15 for the second 200 feet, and after that, the slope is gentle enough that Climb checks are unnecessary. A Climb check that fails by 5 or more results in a 1d20 × 10 foot fall.

For some time after the initial impact, the crater itself is quite inhospitable. In addition to being filled with smoke (see the next section), the surface of the crater remains horribly hot. Characters in contact with the crater's surface take 6d6 points of fire damage per round, with a successful Reflex save (DC 20) halving the damage. The crater cools at the rate of 1d6 points of damage per hour, so after 6 hours the crater is cool enough to walk on safely.

The air inside the crater is also dangerous. For several hours after the impact, vaporized minerals and steam generated from the groundwater in the impact site fill the crater with superheated gas. All creatures inside the crater or up to 300 feet above it take 10d6 points of fire damage per round. This damage decreases by 2d6 points per hour, until after 5 hours the steam has cooled enough that the interior of the crater stabilizes at severe heat (see page 303 of the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide*) for an additional 1d4 days.

The blast of fire has a dangerous side-effect; huge wildfires ignite and tear through the countryside. Treat these wildfires as forest fires (DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide*, pages 87–88). The wildfires continue to burn for 1d4 days, and can spread hundreds of miles from the impact site in this time.

Additionally, the explosion and these fires produce huge clouds of smoke. A radius of about 5 miles around the crater remains hazy and smoky for 1d4 days, and all creatures in this region gain concealment during this time. The smoke isn't heavy enough to cause choking and coughing except in the immediate vicinity of a wildfire. Smoke and ash higher in the atmosphere blot out sunlight in the region for several weeks, during which time the weather remains gloomy and overcast. Creatures with light sensitivity are unaffected by the sunlight during the day as long as these conditions persist. At night, clouds of gas high in the atmosphere often shimmer and glow with energy, casting an unhealthy and disturbing glow upon the landscape below.

APPROACHING THE CRATER (EL 13)

Rhale was once a prosperous trading town, located in a fairly remote wilderness area where three major trade routes cross. The town had a fair system of defenses and a popular magical trade, but none of this helped much when the Fane of Scales descended.

Although it is possible for the characters to quickly travel to ground zero by using magic, keep in mind that for several hours

after the event this region is quite dangerous. A wiser tactic would be to approach the site more slowly and wait for the smoke, heat, and other dangers to subside. As the characters approach the crater, read the following.

> Thick black clouds streaming with jagged bolts of crimson lightning hang over the horizon; they swirl and churn above like an angry, living swarm. A cold and bitter air sweeps in from the north, carrying charnel smells of fire, acid, and decay. Fires burn on the windswept plains, and between the rising plumes of smoke, wagons and trading caravans flee toward safety.

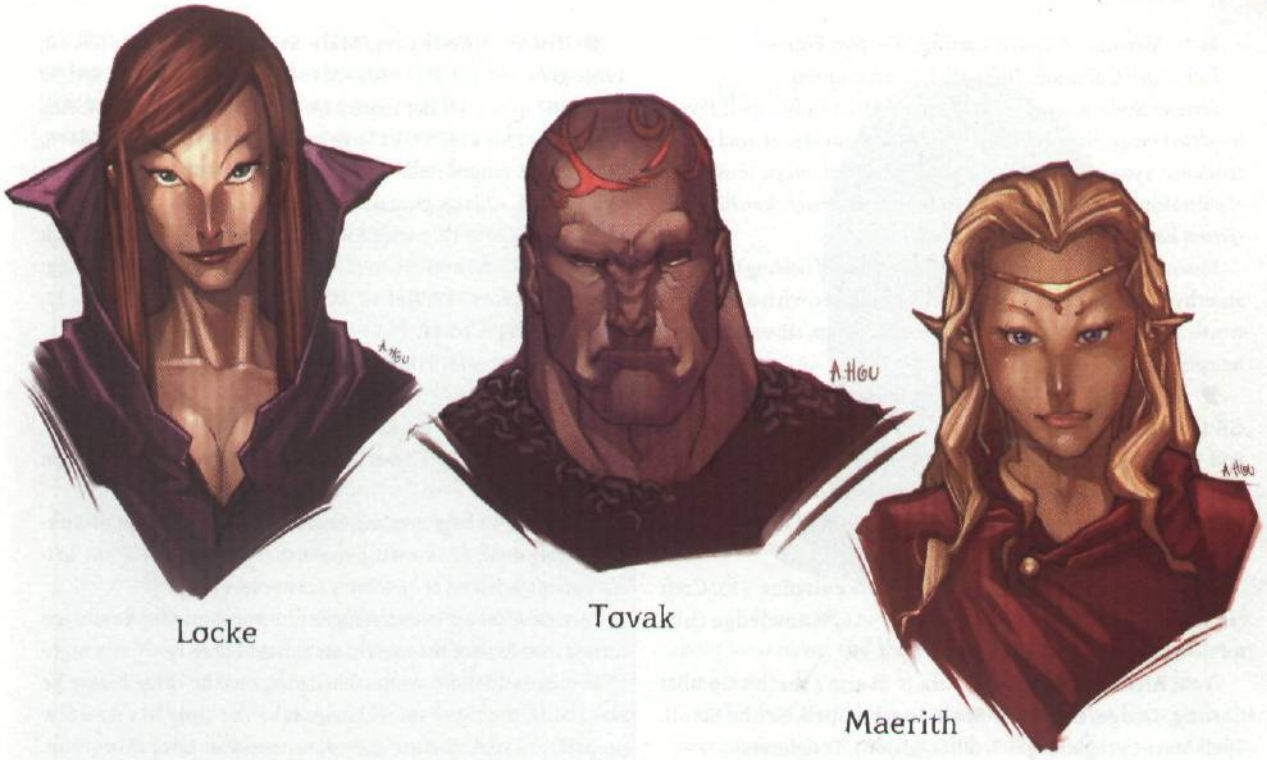
Eventually, a small group draws near the characters. This group of refugees consists of three merchant caravans that have banded together for support; each caravan lost about half its members to the explosion's effects, and the surviving 12 merchants and 7 heavy horses are burnt, wounded, and terrified. The merchants now want only to make their way back to civilization. Unfortunately, the PCs aren't the only ones who have noticed them.

Tobias Frost and his mercenaries waste no time moving in toward the crater. He intends to give the Black Covenant a few hour's head start on the exploration of the Fane of Scales, so they soften up the defenses of the Fane at the same time they deplete their own resources. What he's not quite sure of is how many of the Black Covenant survived the explosion, which was much more devastating than he had anticipated. He and his mercenaries have thus been moving about the countryside and interrogating refugees about the Black Covenant in an attempt to find out if any of them survived the blast.

> A small band of about a dozen refugees, their skin blistered by fire and limbs wrapped in bandages and makeshift splints, staggers along the buckled ground toward you. Suddenly, two figures appear at the edge of the refugees with a flash of light; these two women stride purposefully into the midst of the group. Most of the refugees panic as the women bark out threats, but one refugee stands her ground. One of the women spots this refugee, points her out with a cry, and suddenly a huge gray giant appears out of nothingness to grab her and keep her from fleeing.

You should stage this encounter so that the PCs are fairly close to the refugees when the mercenaries begin to menace them. A wizardly mercenary named Maerith used a *dimension door* to transport herself and Locke (the other woman) into the midst of the refugees, but if any of the PCs can *see invisible* creatures, they may notice the giant, Tovak, standing nearby before this scene occurs.

Creatures: Tobias Frost's mercenaries are hard-edged, unscrupulous adventurers whose primary aim is to acquire



Locke

Tovak

Maerith

wealth. Of the three, only Locke is truly evil; but there is nevertheless little the trio won't do for the right amount of money.

Locke is the most enigmatic of Tobias's current group. Even Tobias knows very little about her, save that she is a talented sorceress with a particularly sadistic streak. Tovak and Maerith are uneasy in her presence, something Locke seems to enjoy. While she appreciates the money and expensive living it affords, Locke takes mercenary jobs more to satiate her desire to inflict pain on others. In truth, she is a rakshasa (*Monster Manual* 211), and seeks to control the *Black Egg* for herself; Tobias suspects there is more to her than she's letting on, but he would never guess that she knows the truth of what lies within the Fane of Scales. Locke's assumed form is that of a very frail human woman with perfectly straight auburn hair and sparkling green eyes. She always bears a wicked smile, and dresses in a dark purple cloak with a low-cut bodice underneath.

Maerith is interested in one thing and one thing only: increasing her standing in the mysterious Order of the Cold Moon. She aims to do so by increasing the number of magic items in her safekeeping, and the life of a mercenary has proven to be quite productive in this goal. Rather than working for money, Maerith has agreed to accompany Tobias in return for his providing her a much-needed clue to the location of the *staff of the magi*. (Tobias actually doesn't know anything of the sort, but his skill at Bluff has convinced Maerith otherwise.) More than any other member of the party, Maerith is doubtful as to Tobias's true motives, but she's willing to overlook that for the information he's promised her. At the same time, she honestly feels that the Black Covenant is a legitimate threat, and working with Tobias and his minions gives her a better chance to oppose them.

Maerith is a lithe and beautiful half-elf woman, with flowing honey-wheat hair and deep sapphire eyes. She wears a cloak of dark crimson and black, soft and high boots, and wields a crooked staff constantly wreathed in white-hot light.

Tovak Bloodheart long ago left his people, a band of reclusive stone giants. He is a grim and resolute warrior, and not one who seems to care too much about anything, including himself. He has never spoken of the tragic event that drove him from the graces of his people, and likely never will. Tovak does not entirely care for the mercenary's life, and he sends the majority of his earnings to some secret contact in the mountains; many other mercenaries would kill to learn his secrets, but none so far have been brave enough to confront Tovak directly. Tovak's bald head is covered with bizarre markings and tattoos; the markings of his long-abandoned tribe and the one reminder he keeps of his former life. Tovak swings a massive greataxe in battle to devastating effect, and his prowess earned him his namesake. He wears dark scale mail armor.

Locke, Female Rakshasa: CR 10; Medium outsider (native); HD 7d8+28; hp 67; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +12 melee (1d4+2/18–20, +2 *kukri*), or +10 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d4+2/18–20, +2 *kukri*), or +10 melee (1d4, 2 claws) and +5 melee (1d6, bite); SA detect thoughts, spells; SQ change shape, damage reduction 15/good and piercing, darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 27; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 21.

Skills: Bluff +23, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +33 (+35 acting), Intimidate +17, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Perform (oratory) +15, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +13, Spot +13.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Infernal, Undercommon.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/5; base DC 15 plus spell level): 0—*detect magic, flare, ghost sound, open/close, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*charm person, expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shocking grasp*; 2nd—*mirror image, scorching ray, spectral hand*; 3rd—*fly, vampiric touch.*

Possessions: +2 *kukri, bracers of armor* +2, *bag of holding (type I)*, 5 amethysts worth 100 gp each, silver ring set with a fire opal worth 1,200 gp, garnet nose ring worth 600 gp, silver and ivory hairpin worth 800 gp, 850 gp.

Maerith of the Cold Moon, Female Half-Elf Wiz10: CR 10; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 10d4+3; hp 32; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +8 ranged (1d8/19–20, +1 *light crossbow*); SA spells; SQ familiar, half-elf traits; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +12; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills: Appraise +12 (+14 alchemy), Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +13, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (history) +13, Listen +5, Spellcraft +18, Spot +5.

Feats: Alertness (as long as Kira is in arm's reach), Combat Casting, Dodge, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Mastery (*lightning bolt, shield, teleport*), Toughness.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/3/2; base DC 13 plus spell level): 0—*detect magic, mage hand, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*magic missile* (3), *shield, sleep*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, cat's grace, Melf's acid arrow, mage armor* (extended, already cast), *mirror image*; 3rd—*displacement, haste, lightning bolt, protection from energy*; 4th—*dimension door, scorching ray* (empowered), *stoneskin*; 5th—*lightning bolt* (empowered), *teleport.*

Spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus the following): 0—all; 1st—*alarm, detect secret doors, disguise self, feather fall, identify, magic weapon*; 2nd—*arcane lock, fox's cunning, knock, levitate, locate object, see invisibility*; 3rd—*daylight, dispel magic, fly, tongues, water breathing*; 4th—*remove curse, scrying, stone shape*; 5th—*break enchantment, cone of cold, sending.*

Possessions: +1 *light crossbow*, 20 bolts, *staff of fire* (10 charges), *ring of protection* +1, *cloak of resistance* +2, scroll of *cone of cold*, scroll of *greater invisibility*, scroll of *dimension door*, potion of *cure moderate wounds*, *wand of magic missile* (3rd level, 25 charges), spellbook worth 5,000 gp, 200 gp.

Kira, Raven Familiar: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD effectively 5; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +5; Grp –7; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d2–5, claws); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA deliver touch spells; SQ empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, speak Common, speak with birds, speak with master; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Appraise +6, Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +10, Listen +2, Spellcraft +15, Spot +4.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Tovak Bloodheart, Male Stone Giant Ftr2: CR 10; Large giant (earth); HD 14d8+2d10+96; hp 171; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +12; Grp +24; Atk +22 melee (3d6+14/×3, +2 *large greataxe*) or +19 melee (1d4+8, slam) or +13 ranged (2d8+12, rock); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (3d6+14/×3, +2 *large greataxe*) or +19 melee (1d4+8, 2 slams) or +13 ranged (2d8+12, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, rock catching; AL CN; SV Fort +18, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 27, Dex 15, Con 22, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +15, Hide +6 (+14 in rocky terrain), Jump +11, Spot +12.

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: +2 *large greataxe, amulet of health* +2, large masterwork scale mail, 12 throwing rocks, 200 gp, 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*, 6 *potions of invisibility* (caster level 10).

Tactics: After a previous refugee interrogation a few hours ago turned sour (one of the merchants turned out to be a fairly high-level rogue and did considerable damage to the three before he was slain), the three mercenaries take the time to cast a few preparatory spells before they *dimension door* in to this group.

While Tovak drinks a *potion of invisibility* and moves forward to the planned intercept point to wait for the refugees to come to him, Maerith and Locke each take a few rounds to cast spells before Maerith *dimension doors* both of them near the refugees. Locke casts *mirror image, expeditious retreat*, and *fly* on herself. Maerith casts *stoneskin, mirror image, cat's grace, bear's endurance*, and *displacement* on herself.

Left to their own devices, the three rough up the refugee for a bit before they learn from her that the majority of the Black Covenant's leaders survived the explosion and were seen approaching the crater, protected by magic, not long after the explosion. If the PCs interrupt the shakedown, the mercenaries attack them. Tovak engages any armored foes while Locke and Maerith use ranged magic. Locke isn't afraid to enter melee, but Maerith avoids physical combat if possible; if threatened with such, she *teleports* away to safety and writes the whole thing off.

These three mercenaries aren't about to give up their lives for Tobias; if it looks like they're facing certain defeat, they try their best to flee. If captured alive, they cooperate with the PCs initially but try to escape as soon as possible.

Development: If the PCs avoid this confrontation, the mercenaries get the information they were looking for (leaving several refugees wounded or accidentally killed), rejoin Tobias, and set out for the Fane of Scales.

If the PCs defeat the mercenaries, the refugees are very grateful but have little to offer them as rewards. If questioned about the falling star, the merchants have nothing new to add to what the PCs themselves witnessed. Most of the merchants point the PCs toward the middle-aged woman that the mercenaries tried to interrogate.

This is Ilsheen Varakkas (female human Mon2/Com3), a strong-willed woman who became the leader of this small group of refugees after she organized the group enough to escape a large wildfire. Ilsheen is a retired monk and a Rhale citizen. Asked about recent events, she has the following to say:

"My farm was a few miles out of town—that way, to the northeast. I was coming back from a hunting trip when it happened. There was a flash of light, like someone tore the sky open. And a huge black ball, bigger than two barns put together, came tearing out of the sky. There wasn't any time to do anything. I only saw it for a second before it tore down right in the middle of Rhale.

"It...it was horrible...my daughters and husband were probably still asleep...so many...friends...but thank the Gods no one suffered. They couldn't have. I covered my eyes and ears when I saw that black orb hit, and just managed to leap into a ditch before the fires and wind hit. It seemed to last for hours, but I know it only lasted an instant. Afterward...all that black smoke clung, like it was frozen in the air. It was like the end of the world—like the gods themselves smote Rhale. But we never did anything wrong! Why would the gods punish Rhale? All those people...my family...now they're just gone...

"And then things got worse. After the ground stopped shaking and the fire and wind had died down, I made my way back to my farm. The dead were everywhere, and the living weren't far off from joining them. People were deaf or blind because they looked right at the blast, but I managed to find several people, those you see here, trapped in the ruins of their houses. Of my farm...of my family...there was nothing left.

"And then, as we started to make our way out of that hellhole, the devils came. Evil beasts, black-skinned creatures with glimmering scales. They were led by three horrid creatures that wore wide gold necklaces and black armor. They headed straight into Rhale—into the crater! And they've been in there, in those poison mists and clouds of steam, ever since."

Try as she might, Ilsheen cannot recall exactly how many creatures there were (close to two dozen, she thinks), nor can she give wholly accurate descriptions, except that she is fairly certain most of them were black-skinned orcs with scales beneath their armor. The necklace-wearing creatures she saw were Gallara, Ravus, and Synder, Covenant elites and the leaders of the Covenant's exploration team.

None of the refugees can even comprehend the possibility of returning to Rhale; all they want is to make their way to some other town and try to start over their ruined lives.

TOBIAS FROST (EL 12)

Tobias Frost's role in this adventure is determined by the method in which the PCs deal with his mercenaries in the previous encounter. Tobias observes the PCs as they interact with and probably fight with his three minions, and likely recognizes the heroes for who they are. He is quite knowledgeable about local news, and the PCs are likely well-known heroes by this point.

Tobias

If the PCs avoided the conflict and did not fight with the mercenaries, chances are good that Tobias doesn't even realize they're in the area. In this case, he continues on to the Fane of Scales with his three mercenaries and with their aid begins to collect the souls of the Black Covenant. He may be encountered later in the adventure, perhaps just as he awakens the *Black Egg*.

If the PCs manage to defeat his minions, however, Tobias is impressed with them enough to make an offer (detailed in **Development** below). He may even enter the combat toward the end to help finish off the mercenaries; once he's decided to use the characters, he'd rather not leave any loose strings behind. If asked about his sudden appearance and attack on the mercenaries, he merely says, "Stay your hand, my friends, we're on the same side. I'm here to deal with those responsible for the destruction of the village of Rhale—these rogues and murderers were among them."

Creature: Tobias Frost has only been adventuring for a few years, but in that short time has more than earned an infamous reputation as a particularly ruthless mercenary and bounty hunter. Known for his cold efficiency, commitment to his task, and his willingness to bend a few laws in order to capture or kill his quarry, mere mention of his name in some circles is enough to empty the room. A PC that hears his name can make a bardic knowledge or Knowledge (local) check (DC 20) to recognize him.

In fact, Tobias has no real interest in serving the common good or bringing criminals to justice, but he has found that mercenary work provides a rewarding and nearly legal outlet for his hostilities against society. Tobias had been trying to acquire information on the Black Covenant for months, but local law enforcement and other conventional means of information gathering did not serve him well. It wasn't until he focused on work as a mercenary that he

made a good deal of headway, mostly by selecting jobs that put him into contact with villainous elements that possessed information on the Covenant. Eventually, he managed to arrange a meeting with them and gave them both the location of the Fane of Scales and the *rod of cancellation* needed to bring it down.

It was simple for Tobias to plot the probable course the falling Fane would take. He and his hired mercenaries then traveled to the Rhale region and waited for the Black Covenant to do the hard part. They had only a few days to wait until the success of the Black Covenant became abundantly clear. Now that the Fane of Scales has returned, he intends to wait for the Black Covenant to attempt to infiltrate the place, thereby triggering and hopefully deactivating the traps and guardians Zebedaster left in the Fane.

Tobias Frost, Male Human Ftr7/Rog5: CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+5d6+24; hp 86; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +10; Grp +14; Atk +16 melee (1d8+6/19–20/×3, *+1 adamantine battleaxe*); Full Atk +16/11 melee (1d8+6/19–20/×3, *+1 adamantine battleaxe*); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +15, Climb +10, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +12, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +5, Ride +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +5.

Feats: Dodge, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Persuasive, Power Attack, Skill Focus (bluff), Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe).

Languages: Common, Draconic.

Possessions: *Blood claw* (see Appendix), *+1 adamantine battleaxe*, composite longbow (+4 Str bonus), 20 arrows, masterwork chain shirt, large steel shield, *gauntlets of ogre power, cape of the mountebank, ring of mind shielding, potion of bear's endurance, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of fly*, 190 gp.

Development: If the PCs are willing to listen to Tobias, he introduces himself as Tobias Hilcrest, and gives them the following information:

- He's tracking down a group called the Black Covenant. They are a cabal of sorcerers, clerics, and monsters, many of which possess draconic heritage, and are all dedicated to the worship of evil dragons and the destruction of non-dragons. They worship Tiamat.
- The object that fell from the sky is an ancient draconic reliquary called the Fane of Scales. The Fane of Scales is reputed to contain an evil artifact of terrible power. Tobias can't say what this artifact can do, though it is rumored to be a potent weapon of evil that was sealed away in the Fane some years ago in order to safeguard it for some future date when it may be needed. Whatever its use, the Black Covenant cannot be allowed to recover it.
- The Black Covenant is responsible for bringing down the Fane of Scales; Tobias says he suspects they used a *rod of cancellation* or similar effect to disrupt the magic that kept the fane suspended high in the skies above.
- Tobias' job is simple: destroy the Black Covenant. There are to be no arrests or prisoners taken—the Covenant has converged on the site in the hopes of acquiring the *Black Egg*. Tobias' job is to stop them.

Of course, what Tobias tells the PCs above is a tangled mess of truth, half-truths, and outright lies. Tobias wears a *ring of mind shielding* to help keep the charade up, and his skill with

DETECTING TOBIAS' RUSE

Tobias is careful to pepper enough truth in what he tells the PCs to make his story seem plausible. The characters may be able to tell that he's bluffing them if they make a successful Sense Motive check, but there are other ways for them to realize there are certain gaps in the information he's providing. If the PCs ask you about any of the following subjects, allow them to make the appropriate skill checks to find out what they might know.

The Fane of Scales (bardic knowledge or Knowledge [arcana] check; DC 25): The character knows that the Fane of Scales was in fact created by a powerful wizard named Zebedaster Frost. If the Knowledge check exceeds the DC by 10 or more, the character recalls the name of the artifact reputed to be hidden in the Fane; the *Black Egg*.

The Black Egg (bardic knowledge or Knowledge [arcana] check; DC 35): The Black Egg is said to have been carved from the heart of a hellfire wyrm; the egg itself reputedly conjures or creates fiendish dragons.

Zebedaster Frost (bardic knowledge or Knowledge [local] check; DC 30): The character recalls that Zebedaster Frost was a powerful wizard who went insane for unknown reasons and was committed to a remote asylum. Zebedaster was an incredibly powerful wizard in his time, but his insanity ruined him. It's generally believed that an artifact drove him insane. He built the Fane of Scales for reasons known only to him shortly before his insanity took over completely and he was committed.

Tobias Hilcrest (bardic knowledge or Knowledge [local] check; DC 35): Tobias has taken pains to keep his personal life secret, but there's a slight chance the PCs have heard of him. If they have, they know he's a highly skilled bounty hunter who has a reputation for cruelty. If the Knowledge check is 10 higher than the required DC, the character has also heard that Tobias' father is rumored to be a powerful wizard, and that Hilcrest is an assumed name.

The Black Covenant (bardic knowledge or Knowledge [local] check; DC 20): All of what Tobias tells the PCs about the Black Covenant matches what a PC might already know about the evil organization, although it's generally believed that none of the members of the Black Covenant are powerful enough to build something like the Fane of Scales.

Bluff should help make the party believe him. While he seems bitter, his personality should not seem out of the ordinary for a seasoned mercenary or bounty hunter.

If the PCs see through Tobias's ruse to some extent and challenge him on it, he makes it clear that he is not of stalwart heart, and admits to being a former criminal who now hunts other criminals for a living. It takes a thief to catch a thief, after all. If the PCs further press him, indicate that they know of his connection to the *Black Egg* via his father, or attack him, he curses and tries to escape via his *cape of the mountebank* and his *potion of fly*. If he manages to escape, he trails the PCs. His new intent is to let them do the dirty work—he'll follow behind and absorb Black Covenant souls with the *blood claw* and then, when he has enough, he makes his way to the *Black Egg* to activate it.

If Tobias accompanies the PCs, he follows through on the role he has created for himself. He uses the *blood claw* whenever any draconic member of the Black Covenant is slain. If a PC questions his actions he is mostly honest: he admits that the *blood claw* is an item that absorbs and holds draconic souls. This is to ensure that the villainous organization's rank and file members do not return some day to cause more havoc. The PCs may have a problem with this—stealing souls, villainous or not, is generally considered an evil act, but Tobias adamantly defends his position. If it seems the PCs are too angry or about to attack him over the matter, he reluctantly agrees to not use the *blood claw*, when in fact he just uses it when no PCs are around to be offended. This makes things a bit more difficult for him once he reaches the *Egg*, but Tobias can go back and collect souls later if it comes to that.

Tobias promises a share of any treasure collected from the Black Covenant if the PCs need further motivation. Chances are, however, that the promise of taking revenge on those responsible for the terrible explosion and destruction of Rhale is enough to motivate the PCs.

THE CRATER OF RHALE (EL 11)

The ruined buildings of the village of Rhale have little left to show that they ever existed at all—only cracked stone foundations remain beyond the rim of the massive crater. Many of these ruins contain grisly remains of blackened and scorched bodies. The acrid scent of vaporized flesh, stone, and earth is almost overpowering. Thick burning clouds continue to drift upward from the depths of the impact. While it is impossible to determine exactly how far the crater plunges, it looks to be at the very least several hundred feet deep.

The Fane of Scales itself, a large orb of black iron 300 feet in diameter, floats silently above the crater like a cold, dead star. The thousands of iron plates that make up the orb's skin resemble overlapping black scales. A small platform juts out from the center of the orb's face, a tiny tongue of dark iron.

Flight, teleportation, or other magic must be utilized to access the Fane of Scales. The Fane floats 100 feet above the rim of the crater, which is about 750 feet above the crater's bed below and approximately half a mile from the edge.

Creatures: Two half-black dragon orc warriors (known to the Covenant as black orcs) and a destrachan patrol the perimeter of the crater, ducking in and out of what little remains of the buildings. These footsoldiers attack any and all non-draconic creatures on sight.

The black orcs have pure black skin, armor, and axes. They wear the holy symbol of Tiamat emblazoned on their armor. Their eyes burn with deep red hatred. The destrachan is their ally, a creature of pure malice and hate, and it hammers away at foes with its powerful sonic attacks before closing in to feast on its sundered meals.

Black Orc War7 (2): CR 8; Medium dragon (augmented humanoid); HD 7d8+14; hp 55 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +7; Grp +15; Atk +16 melee (1d12+13/×3, *+1 greataxe*) or +15 melee (1d6+8, bite); Full Atk +16/11 melee (1d13+12/×3, *+1 greataxe*) and +10 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA breath weapon; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immune to acid, immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, light sensitivity, low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 26, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 7, Cha 8.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, 60-ft line of acid, 6d8 damage, Reflex half (DC 12).

Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +3, Jump +10.

Feats: Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Possessions: +1 greataxe, +1 half-plate armor, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, 2 potions of fly, 30 gp.

Destrachan: hp 60; *Monster Manual* 49.

Development: If the black orcs or destrachan are interrogated, they have little information of use to impart. The leaders of the Black Covenant don't bother to inform the help of all their plans; these low-ranking members haven't even been to the Fane of Scales.

THE FANE OF SCALES

Zebedaster Frost constructed the Fane of Scales in secret, but it was not of his design. Like so much of his madness, the Fane's construction was inspired by the strange consciousness that resides within the *Black Egg*. During Zebedaster's last days of freedom and madness, he collected many items of dark power, all of which he protected from his perceived enemies by hiding them in the Fane.

The Fane still retains a good deal of its power, even if the overall structure was damaged in the crash. Although many of the interior walls of the Fane have partially or wholly collapsed, the chambers remain structurally sound, protected by the powerful magic that infuses its exterior.

Since crashing, the Fane is slowly rebuilding its powers of flight. It now floats 100 feet above the upper rim of the crater it created, silently floating and awaiting the arrival of its "meals." By the time the PCs arrive, the Covenant has already penetrated the Fane; their locations are noted below.

FEATURES OF THE FANE OF SCALES

The exterior of the Fane of Scales is all but impossible to breach. The interior walls are quite hard, but not nearly as hard as the external walls. Unless otherwise noted, all interior areas are lit by a strange, reddish glow that appears to emanate directly from the walls. The entire Fane radiates evil of an overwhelming degree, although many of the defensive spells that once dominated the structure have long since faded.

All walls and ceilings are made of iron. The external walls are approximately 20 feet thick. While the Fane was in orbit, a massive *wall of force* encased it; this *wall of force* remained in place during the Fane's fall and protected it from the subsequent impact, but it soon thereafter deactivated to allow entry. The cosmetic damage done to the lower reaches of the fane resulted when it levitated up out of the still partially molten rubble below. Powerful magic inside the Fane generated by the Black Egg cushioned most of the damage inside, but several internal walls were damaged or collapsed nonetheless.

All doors are made of iron and are 2 inches thick. The external walls, internal walls, and doors all possess spell resistance 22, and any magic that overcomes this affects the wall normally; the internal walls can be altered, damaged, or destroyed. Ceiling height inside the Fane is a uniform 25 feet high.

External Iron Wall: 20 feet thick; hardness 10; hp 7,200 per 10-ft.-by-10-ft. section.

Internal Iron Wall: 3 inches thick; hardness 10; hp 90; break DC 28; Open Lock DC 28.

Iron Door: 2 inches thick; hardness 10; hp 60; break DC 28; Open Lock DC 28.

1. ENTRANCE TO THE FANE OF SCALES (EL 13)

An iron lip extends 15 feet from the face of the huge sphere, leading into a 15-foot-long corridor. At the end of the passageway stand a pair of tall, black, iron doors, marred with large scratches and unidentified stains. The doors hang ajar, and a red glow flickers in the gloom beyond.

These doors were, until recently, warded with *symbols of death*. They were both deactivated by Tilviander, a member of the Black Covenant who not long after fell victim to the guardian of area 2.

Creature: Korakkus, a half-white dragon cloud giant with a cruel streak as wide as he is tall, stands guard here. Commander of the black orcs that serve the Covenant as muscle, Korakkus is a fierce warrior and a brutal combatant. He is a fervent supporter of the Black Covenant and a devout worshiper of Tiamat. He volunteered to remain on guard here while the rest of the surviving Covenant members loot the Fane. He doesn't stop to listen to any non-draconic creatures

that approach, and attacks them on sight after bellowing a warning back into the Fane.

Korakkus, Male Half-White Dragon/Cloud Giant: CR 13; Huge dragon (augmented giant); HD 17d12+119; hp 240; Init +1; Spd 35 ft., fly 70 ft. (average) with full plate, base speed 50 ft., fly 100 ft.; AC 35, touch 9, flat-footed 34; Base Atk +12; Grp +36; Atk +27 melee (4d6+17 plus 1d6 electricity/19–20, *+1 gargantuan shock longsword*) or +11 ranged (2d8+16, rock); Full Atk +27/+22/+17 melee (4d6+17 plus 1d6 electricity/19–20, *+1 gargantuan shock longsword*) and +21 melee (2d6+8, bite) and +21 melee (1d8+8, claw), or +11 ranged (2d8+16, rock); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA breath weapon, rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immune to cold, immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, low-light vision, oversized weapon, rock catching, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 43, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, 30-foot cone of cold, 6d8 damage, Reflex half (DC 34).

Skills: Climb +26, Intimidate +22, Listen +13, Sense Motive +23, Spot +23.

Feats: Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Power Attack.

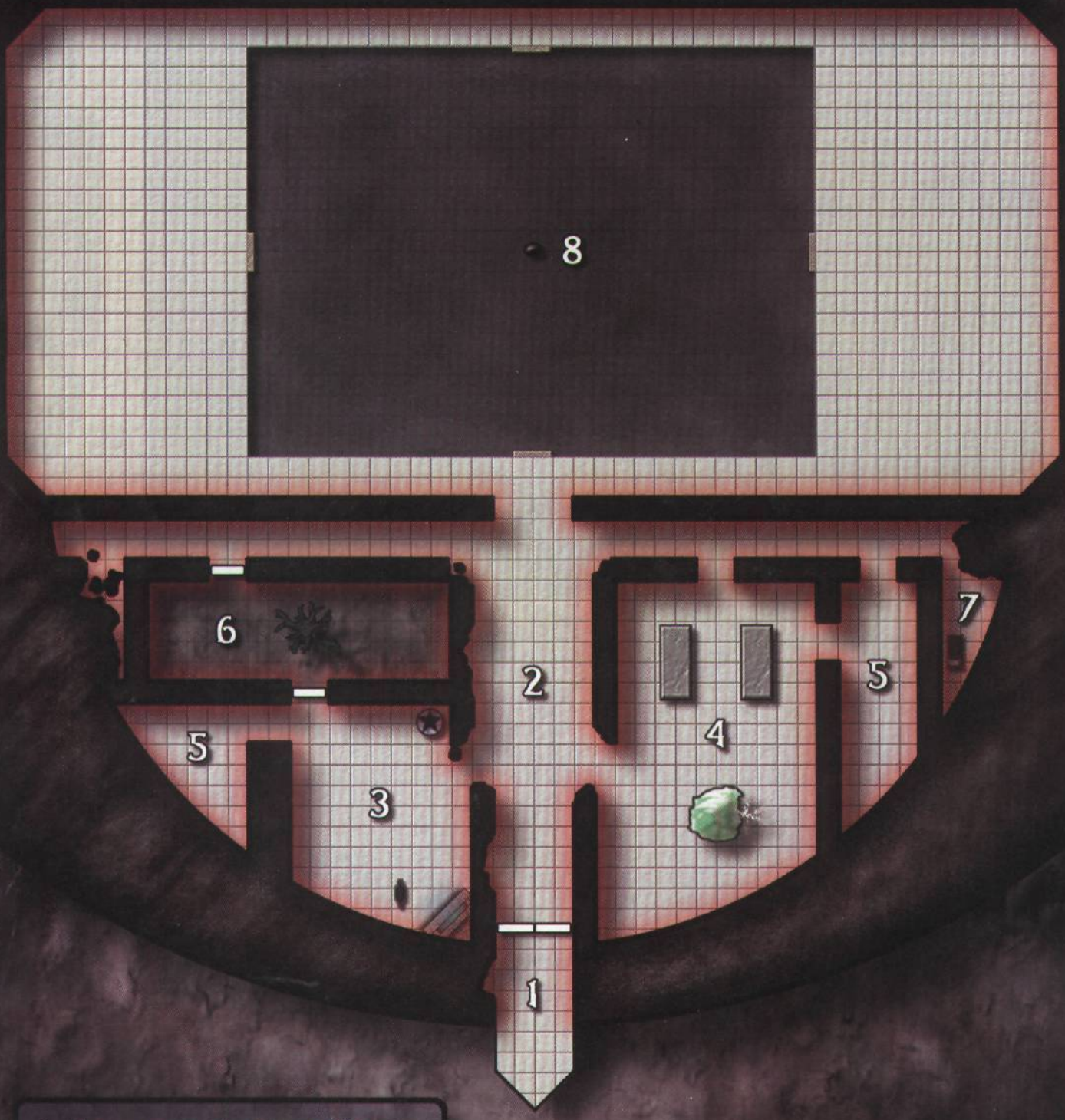
Languages: Common, Draconic, Giant.

INTERROGATING THE BLACK COVENANT

The named members of the Black Covenant are fanatics; they would all choose death before revealing their secrets to a non-dragon. Nonetheless, it is possible for PCs to interrogate captured Covenant members, most likely via spells like *charm monster* or even *speak with dead*. All of the named members of the Black Covenant have the following information to give in this case:

- The Fane of Scales was constructed by a mad wizard named Zebedaster Frost, acting under the guidance of an intelligent artifact called the *Black Egg*. In it, he stored many items of evil design, though it is the *Egg* itself that the Black Covenant is after.
- The *Black Egg* is an item carved from the body and soul of a hellfire wyrm, a terribly powerful form of dragon native to the Nine Hells of Baator. The *Egg* is possessed of evil power, and is capable of birthing fiendish dragons, provided it is fed the souls of other dragons. (They are not sure how this "feeding process" occurs.)
- The Black Covenant is a cult of dragonspawn (and others that worship dragons) who desire to see evil dragons dominate the world, and to crush the humanoid races. At the DM's option, the NPC can grant directions to any of the Covenant's numerous hideouts, though such information goes beyond the scope of this adventure.

The FANE OF SCALES

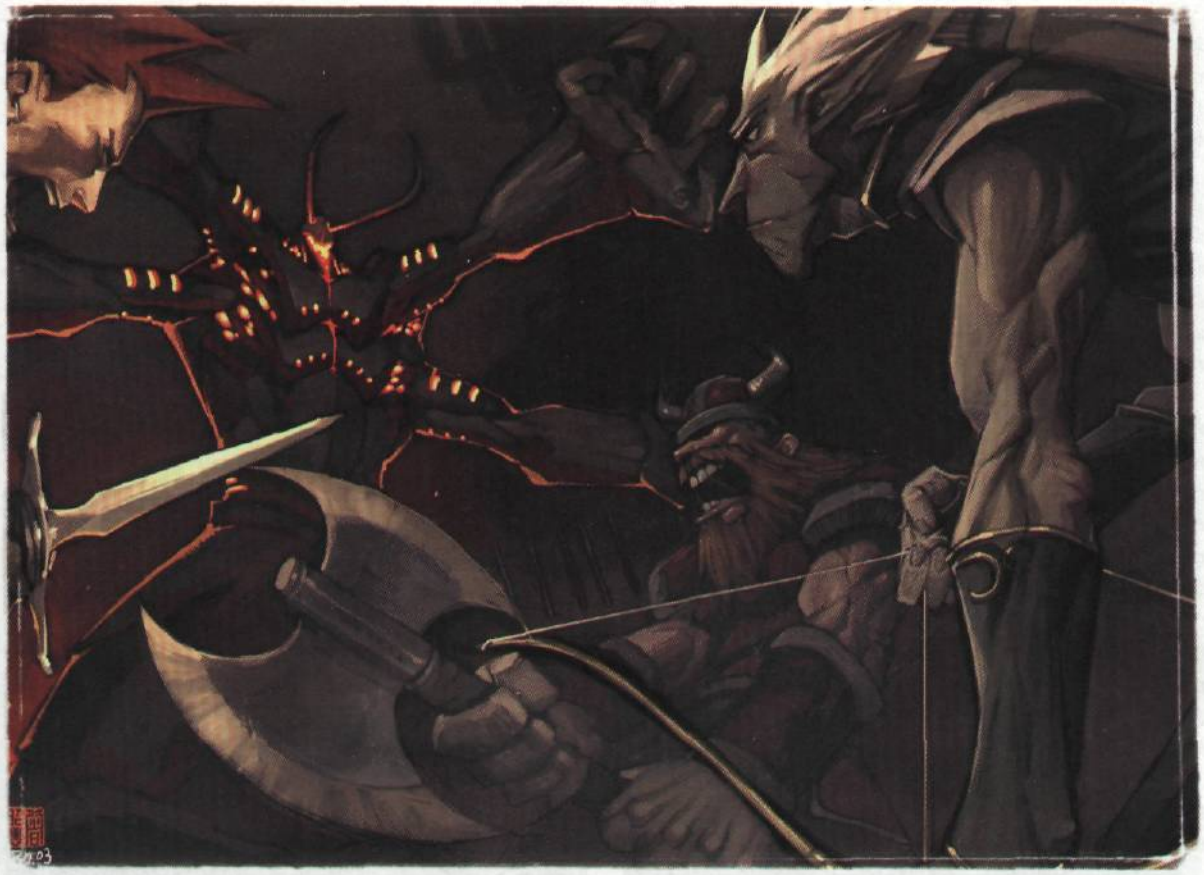


KEY

1. Entrance to the Fane of Scales
2. Heads and Tails
3. Guardian of the Forge
4. Crystal Souls
5. Mural Chambers
6. The Poison Tree
7. Zebedaster's Bedchamber
8. The Black Egg

1 square = 5 feet

WEST



Possessions: Huge masterwork full plate, *+1 gargantuan shock longsword*, two *potions of rage*, 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*.

2. HEADS AND TAILS (EL 12)

Beyond the sturdy door is a 20-foot-wide hallway. A fierce battle took place here very recently; that, combined with the effects of the crash, left this hall in shambles. Many large plates of cold black iron have fallen away from the walls and ceiling, and the floor and walls are pitted with blade marks. Two humanoid bodies lie on the ground, both pig-faced, black-scaled creatures. A subtle throb pulsates in the air, as if the sphere itself is breathing.

Zebedaster Frost erected numerous defenses in this entry hall. When the Covenant arrived, they stumbled into the hydra, which killed a good number of the black orcs, along with the group's best rogue, Tilviander. The rest of the group wisely fled, and the hydra has been too busy enjoying its meal to pursue them.

Creature: Squatting in the center of the chamber, gnawing on the remains of one of the black orcs, is a massive eleven-headed pyrohydra. The creature attacks anyone that dares to enter this area.

Eleven-Headed Pyrohydra: hp 139; *Monster Manual* 157.

Treasure: The hydra's breath destroyed much of the equipment dropped by the slaughtered black orcs and Tilviander, but some of its still remains, scattered about the floor haphazardly. This equipment consists of three masterwork greataxes, two suits of half-plate armor, three potions of *cure moderate wounds*, a *+2 rapier*, and a *lens of detection*.

In addition, the hydra wears a *ring of sustenance* on one of its many claws.

Development: Any fighting here alerts the denizens of areas 3 and 4, who after this point will be expecting the PCs and will have made appropriate preparations.

If Tobias is with the PCs, the hydra attacks him as much as the PCs. These attacks aggravate Tobias enough that the PCs may notice that he appears angry that the hydra attacked him, as if it were a personal affront. The hydra was taught not to attack Zebedaster; Tobias assumed incorrectly it would know not to attack him, either.

3. GUARDIAN OF THE FORGE (EL 12)

A cold forge rests in the southeast corner of this mostly barren chamber. Shards of metal and stone as well as about a half dozen cold iron rods lie scattered across the floor. A black-skinned, scaly humanoid body lies on the floor in a pool of its own blood. The culprit appears to be a faceless, four-armed humanoid statue of stone that stands motionlessly in the corner of the room, fresh blood splayed on its hands and across its chest.

Zebedaster created many weapons and magical items, including the *blood claw* itself, in this forge. The forge is of excellent quality and grants a +2 bonus on any Craft checks made with it. It also radiates powerful transmutation magic, and is tied to the **Creature** that guards the chamber.

Several Black Covenant black orcs came though this chamber after splitting from their allies in area 2 and were immediately attacked by the **Creature**. It was destroyed, but when it reanimated (see below), Gallara decided that this was a battle she didn't need to deal with, and so she and the black orcs that accompanied her fled to the empty room to the west to rest and recuperate.

Creature: One of Zebedaster's crowning achievements, this four-armed stone statue is actuality a specifically modified stone golem. The golem attacks any creature that enters the room, save Zebedaster himself. The golem does not pursue enemies beyond the limits of this room; if it is attacked with ranged weapons from outside the room, it simply takes the damage. If the golem is reduced to 0 hit points, it crumbles to dust. Only 1d4+1 rounds later, however, the forge flashes with fire and a new four-armed stone golem clambers out of it, ready for battle.

The golem can rebuild itself in this manner as many times as necessary as long as the forge remains functional. If the golem is destroyed after the forge is ruined, it does not rebuild itself. Likewise, if the golem is forced to move out of this room and then destroyed before it can re-enter it, it remains destroyed.

Four-Armed Stone Golem: hp 102; Atk +18 melee (2d10+9, slam); Full Atk +18 melee (2d10+9, 4 slams); *Monster Manual* 136.

Cold Iron Forge: 2,000 lbs.; hardness 10; hp 1,800.

Ad-Hoc XP Reward: If the PCs manage to permanently defeat the four-armed stone golem, they earn 150% the normal experience points for this encounter.

4. CRYSTAL SOULS (EL 12+)

Two large tables sit in the northern part of this room, but the most impressive sight looms to the south, where a massive green crystal that measures nearly 15 feet in diameter sits in a metal framework. Encased inside the crystal, like insects trapped in tree sap, are three humanoid figures with translucent bodies. Long-decayed husks of internal organs are visible amidst perfectly preserved bones. The three bodies lie in contorted positions, as if caught in some unmoving, ghostly dance.

This chamber houses a foul magic item Zebedaster collected long ago, the *Crystal of Crying Souls*. This device could once capture undead inside of it, allowing a spellcaster who knew the proper techniques to use the captured undead to fuel his own magic item creation. Within the *Crystal* are the trapped remains of three former assassins of a long-lost age, magically preserved as bodaks. The *Crystal* has lost its powers of entrapment, but it continues to hold the three bodaks within captive as long as it remains undamaged. Unfortunately, the descent of the Fane of Scales nearly destroyed the *Crystal*, and it only takes a little bit more work to finish the job.

If the *Crystal* is broken, the bodaks may escape (see below). The magic that contains the bodaks functions at caster level 20.

Crystal of Crying Souls: 6 inches thick; hardness 8; hp 60 (currently 4); Break DC 26.

Creatures: Two black orcs and a half-white dragon gnoll named Grenaug fled to this chamber after a terrible battle with the pyrohydra in area 2. The hydra has so far not followed them into this chamber, so the three half-dragons are taking advantage of this fact to recover from their wounds.

Grenaug reports directly to Ravus, and is a little annoyed that he has been ordered to wait here with the two black orcs while Ravus and Synder try to harness the power of the *Black Egg*. Grenaug wears black plate armor that stands in stark contrast to his snowy fur, and in his hands he carries a powerful greataxe carved of blue steel.

Black Orc War7 (2): hp 55 each; see page 66 for details.

Grenaug, Male Half-White Dragon Gnoll Ftr7/Blk2: CR 12; Medium dragon (augmented humanoid); HD 2d12+9d10+77; hp 141; Init +4; Spd 20 feet; AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +10; Grp +19; Atk +22 melee (1d12+17 plus 1d6 cold/×3, +2 *greataxe*); Full Atk +22/+17 melee (1d12+17 plus 1d6 cold/×3, +2 *greataxe*) and +14 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA breath weapon, smite good 1/day, spells; SQ aura of evil, darkvision 60 ft., dark blessing, *detect good*, immune to cold, immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, low-light vision, poison use; AL CE; SV Fort +20, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 28, Dex 10, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, 30 ft. cone of cold, 6d8 damage, Reflex Save half (DC 18).

Skills: Concentration +9, Hide +9, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +9, Spot +9.

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Blackguard Spells Prepared (2; base DC 12 plus spell level): 1st—*doom*, *inflict light wounds*.

Possessions: +2 *frost greataxe*, +2 *full plate*, 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 10 doses of large scorpion venom, 200 gp.

Bodaks (3): hp 68, 59, 58; *Monster Manual* 28.

Tactics: Like the other members of the Black Covenant, Grenaug and his black orcs waste no words on non-dragons and attack on sight. Grenaug's knowledge of undead and magic items allowed him to deduce the nature of the *Crystal of Crying Souls*; if it looks like the PCs are about to win the fight he does his best to break the *Crystal* open and release the bodaks within as his final act.

Treasure: A set of *iron bands of Bilarro* sits under one of the tables. Zebedaster once used it to secure prisoners before torturing them for fun. He did not get to use the tables very many times before he was apprehended, but the magic *bands* remain.

5. MURAL CHAMBERS

The iron walls here are layered with thousands of scratches and etchings made with a sharp blade. Although crude in design, the markings form a mural depicting a large dragon. The room is otherwise bare, save for shavings of iron scattered about the floor.

Frost's slavish devotion to the *Black Egg* led him to carve these rough murals. He was no artist, and the uncoordinated, almost childish fruits of his labor illustrate this fact. Nonetheless, a successful Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the dragon as a fiendish red dragon. The dragon is depicted in slightly different poses in each room.

The western mural room shows signs of a recent campsite. Gallara and two black orcs rested in this chamber before they attempted to escape back to the rest of the complex via area 6.

6. THE POISON TREE (EL 13)

This long and narrow chamber has iron doors in the north and south walls. Unlike the other areas of the Fane, the floor of this room is made of hard-packed black soil. Skulls and other humanoid bones are partially buried in the loamy soil, but the most prominent feature in the room is a large tree of black bark, some 20 feet high and 10 feet around at the base of its trunk. Thick, slimy roots, like an unmoving mass of snakes, protrude from the soil. Despite its motionlessness, the roots seem to creep away from the base of the tree, as if the black plant wanted to claw its way across the dirt. The tree is leafless and lifeless, but a number of plump, foul-smelling black fruits dangle from its limbs. They resemble bulging eggplants or plums filled with some unnameable fluid.

Two black-skinned humanoid husks lie in the loam, their scaly faces emaciated and withered. A foul smell, almost like rotting flowers, taints the air.

Zebedaster managed to locate this malign tree on the Abyss and transplanted it here in soil that magically replenishes its nutrients, hoping and believing that he could put the tree to some use. The tree's foul presence darkened and poisoned the soil, which Zebedaster was able to harvest and use to kill his perceived enemies; the fruits that the tree produces, however, are useless. Eventually Zebedaster lost interest in the tree and left it to its madness.

The stink of rotting flowers in the air is in fact poison gas; see the **Trap**.

Creatures: The tree is, in reality, a fiendish treant that has gone insane after its long stay in this chamber. Its presence has turned the soil into a poisonous substance that produces dangerous gas (see the **Trap**). The fiendish treant knows only its hunger now, and ravenously attacks anyone who enters the room.

When the PCs first visit this room, the poison tree is engaged in battle. It has already slain two black orcs, and is now fighting against Gallara, a half-green dragon drow sorceress and devout worshiper of Tiamat.

Gallara is a hideous and evil creature, born of hate and bred to despise all non-draconic forms. She vehemently promotes and anticipates the downfall of humanity and the rise of dragonkind. She is tall and muscular, with long white hair that only barely conceals the green scales on her dark flesh and her abnormally large mouth and twisted teeth. Her yellow eyes burn like angry flames, and her dark clothing is left stained with the blood of those she has sacrificed in the name of her dragon god. She wears a torque that bears the symbol of Tiamat.

Gallara, Female Half-Green Dragon Drow Sor8: CR 11; Medium dragon (augmented humanoid); HD 8d4+27; hp 47; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25 (currently has *mage armor* and *shield* active), touch 13, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +4; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, bite) or +8 ranged (1d4/19–20, +2 *hand crossbow*); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, bite) and +3 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) or +8 ranged (1d4/19–20, +2 *hand crossbow*); SA breath weapon, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, immune to acid, immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, light blindness, low-light vision, spell resistance 19; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +10 (+12 against spells and spell-like abilities); Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 20.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, 30-ft. cone of corrosive gas, 6d8 damage, Ref SV half (DC 13).

Skills: Concentration +14, Knowledge (Arcana) +12, Spellcraft +14.

Feats: Combat Casting, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness.

Languages: Draconic, Drow.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/6/4; save DC 15 + spell level): 0—*daze, detect magic, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp, true strike*; 2nd—*invisibility, levitate, scorching ray*; 3rd—*dispel magic, lightning bolt*; 4th—*ice storm*.

*Gallara has already cast 4 1st-level, 2 2nd-level, and 1 3rd-level spell, so her current spell capacity is 6/4/5/5/4.

Possessions: +2 *hand crossbow*, 14 hand crossbow bolts, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +1, *wand of vampiric touch* (6th level, 34 charges), golden torque (worth 50 gp).

The Poison Tree, Fiendish Advanced Treant: CR 11; Huge plant (extraplanar); HD 11d8+55; hp 105 (currently 86); Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 7, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +8; Grp +25; Atk +15 melee (2d6+9, slam); Full Atk +15 melee (2d6+9, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA animate trees, double damage against objects, smite good 1/day (+11 damage against good foe), trample 2d6+13; SQ darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, damage reduction 10/slashing, low-light vision, plant traits, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire 10, spell resistance 16, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 29, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills: Diplomacy +6, Hide –6, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +9, Survival +8 (+10 aboveground).

Feats: Cleave, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Languages: Common, Sylvan, Treant.

Tactics: Gallara tries to keep ranged superiority over the poison tree and any other foes; the poison tree simply closes to attack the closest target. If she gets the feeling that all her enemies are fairly weakened, Gallara's ego gets the better of her and she charges into the fray with her claws and bite.

Trap: The soil in this room has been poisoned by the poison tree's presence. This colorless but foul-smelling inhaled poison is normally harmless, but any vigorous motion on the soil (such as combat) quickly stirs up the fumes. When the characters enter this room, the fumes are finally thick enough to be dangerous, and both the PCs and Gallara must make Fortitude saving throws each round to avoid the effects of the gas. The fumes dissipate quickly once they leave this room, or once the soil is allowed to sit for 1d4 rounds.

Poisonous Fumes: CR 7; hazard; location trigger; automatic reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in the room); never miss; poison (DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Wisdom/2d6 Wisdom); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 35.

7. ZEBEDASTER'S BEDCHAMBER (EL9)

> Great blocks of iron, evidently knocked loose from the walls and ceiling from the crash, partially block the entrance into this narrow, dagger-shaped room. With the exception of a single, dust-covered bed, the room contains no furnishings.

When he was able to sleep, Zebedaster Frost used this small room. It has been untouched since his last visit. A successful Search check (DC 20) uncovers a hidden compartment under the bed.

Trap: The hidden compartment is warded with a *symbol of death* trap; those who succumb to this trap are violently torn in half as if by massive invisible claws.

***Symbol of Death* Trap**: CR 9; spell; spell trigger (upon seeing the *symbol*); no reset; spell effect (symbol of death, 20th-level wizard, slays one or more creatures within a 60-foot burst whose combined total current hit points do not exceed 150; DC 23 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 33; Disable Device 33.

Treasure: Inside the box are three arcane spell scrolls penned by Zebedaster (*lesser geas, polymorph any object*, and *stone to flesh*, all at caster level 16), as well as a small diamond worth 4,000 gp. The diamond is wrapped in a piece of cloth. This cloth shows a picture of the *blood claw* resting over a large black egg—the *Black Egg*, to be precise. A crack lies in the Egg's face, through which a large reptilian claw juts, as if trying to dig itself out. If the PCs are allied with Tobias, they may recognize the *blood claw*.

At the bottom of the box is a large tome bound in slimy black leather. This is one of Zebedaster's spellbooks; you should fill

this book with spells appropriate to your campaign. Zebedaster was a 16th-level wizard, so the book contains no 9th-level spells.

8. THE BLACK EGG (EL 14+)

This chamber is enormous, with a ceiling that measures at least 50-feet tall. The majority of the vast room is occupied by a shallow pool of boiling black liquid. Four extremely short iron planks, each about 10 feet wide and 2 feet long, protrude from the walkway at the four cardinal directions.

In the center of the pool a large black oval, an egg of ebon scales, floats serenely about 5 feet above the roiling surface below.

This chamber is the heart and brain of the Fane of Scales, the source of its power. The pool is filled with poisonous liquid secreted by the *Black Egg*. The pool is only a foot deep, but all non-dragons in contact with the poison must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 26) each round or take 3d6 Strength damage. A creature reduced to 0 Strength falls and may drown on the poison. The poison's properties are maintained by the Fane of Scales, and the stuff becomes inert if it is brought beyond the Fane's exterior walls.

The *Black Egg* is detailed in the Appendix.

Creatures: The leaders of the Black Covenant team, Ravus and Synder, are located here. After sending all of their black orc minions to their doom in an attempt to take the *Black Egg*, the two have spent some time on the shores of the pool trying to figure out how to secure the Egg.

Ravus is a tall, muscular half-blue dragon elf ranger. His long hair is done in braids, and his dark, almost ebon skin is peppered with glittering blue scales. His black and gold armor is swathed beneath a great black cape, and, like other high-ranking members of the Black Covenant, he wears a torque engraved with the symbol of Tiamat.

Synder wears no torque, but is terrifying nonetheless. This powerful half-red dragon troll's scaly flesh is covered in knotted muscles, and his black armor rasps menacingly with every step he takes.

Ravus and Synder have been allies and friends for many, many years. While Ravus is the "brains" behind the duo, each would give his life for the other, in spite of their chaotic nature.

Ravus, Male Half-Blue Dragon Elf Rgr10: CR 12; Medium dragon (augmented humanoid); HD 10d8+40; hp 75; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +10; Grp +17; Atk +19 melee (1d8+7/17–20, +1 *keen longsword*); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d8+7/17–20, +1 *keen longsword*) and +17/12 melee (1d6+3/19–20, +1 *short sword*) and +12 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA breath weapon, combat style, favored enemy +4 (humans), favored enemy +4 (dwarves), favored enemy +2 (elves), improved combat style; SQ animal companion (Ravus's animal companion, a monitor lizard, was slain and eaten by the pyrohydra), darkvision 60 ft., elf traits, evasion, immune to elec-

tricity, immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, low-light vision, swift tracker, wild empathy +11, woodland stride; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 24, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, 60-foot line of lightning, 6d8 damage, Reflex save half (DC 14).

Skills: Climb +20, Concentration +17, Heal +15, Hide +16, Jump +20, Listen +19, Move Silently +16, Search +5, Spot +19, Survival +15.

Feats: Alertness, Endurance[B], Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Track[B], Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (short sword).

Ranger Spells Prepared (2/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—*longstrider, magic fang*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, protection from energy*.

Possessions: *+2 studded leather armor, +1 keen longsword, +1 short sword, amulet of natural armor +2, wand of cure moderate wounds* (11 charges), *2 potions of cure serious wounds*, 124 gp, gold torque (worth 50 gp).

Synder, Male Half-Red Dragon Troll Ftr5: CR 12; Large dragon (augmented giant); HD 6d12+5d10+88; hp 149; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +9; Grp +23; Atk +21 melee (3d6+16/×3, *+1 large greataxe*); Full Atk +21/+16 melee (3d6+16/×3, *+1 large greataxe*) and +14 melee (1d6+5, claw) and +14 melee (1d8+5, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon, rend 2d6+15; SQ darkvision 90 ft, immune to fire, immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, low-light vision, regeneration 5, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 31, Dex 14, Con 26, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, 30-ft. cone of fire, 6d8 damage, Reflex Save half (DC 20).

Skills: Climb +17, Jump +16, Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +3.

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: *+1 large chain shirt, +1 large greataxe, ring of evasion*, 245 gp.

Tactics: If Ravus and Synder are aware that the PCs are in the Fane, Ravus casts *protection from elements (acid)* on Synder and *bear's endurance* on himself. If either he or Synder are disarmed over the course of the combat, he casts *magic fang* to make a natural attack more effective. Both start combat with breath weapons, and if possible, focus melee attacks on a single opponent in order to ensure that at least some of their enemies are brought down. Ravus and Synder know they can move without fear in the poison pool, and do so as much as possible in order to force strong melee fighters to risk poisoning in order to engage them in combat.

Treasure: Beyond the gear carried by these two half-dragons, the only object of value in this room is the *Black Egg* itself.

Development: When and how Tobias becomes involved in this encounter depends on whether or not he is traveling with the PCs. If he enlisted their aid and he has gathered at least 19 Hit Dice of draconic souls in the blood claw, he immediately moves to the *Black Egg* and feeds it the souls. He can create one half-fiend young adult red dragon per round in this manner, and is limited only by the number of souls he has absorbed with the *blood claw*. He immediately commands any half-fiend dragons to slay his "allies," if any are present. If Tobias is acting on his own and the PCs haven't encountered him prior to this point, then he is encountered here just as he uses the *blood claw* to create a dragon. His mercenary minions are present as well, but once he creates the first half-fiend dragon he loses interest

Ravus

in them. Half-fiend dragons attack anyone but Tobias, so clever PCs can work with Locke, Maerith, and Tovak to stop him.

Note that the half-fiend dragons created by the *Black Egg* are CR 16 monsters; you should take care inflicting such creatures on a group of four 12th-level characters!

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If Tobias's plans come to fruition, he establishes the Fane of Scales as his lair and begins to lure dragons to the vicinity so he can use the *blood claw* to feed the *Black Egg*. Over time, he could amass a formidable army of half-fiend dragons, which he uses to further his dark whims of destruction and cruelty.

With luck and skill, the PCs can prevent this doom by destroying the Egg, the *blood claw*, Tobias, or all three. If the *Black Egg* is destroyed, the Fane of Scales looses its ability to stay aloft after one minute of shaking and shuddering, after which it drops back into the crater and shatters. All creatures and objects inside the fane when it falls take 20d6 points of damage and are buried in rubble (see the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide*, page 90).

If Tobias Frost escapes, the PCs have made a deadly and deranged adversary. Finally, now that the Fane of Scales has returned and the *Black Egg* may have been awakened, Zebedaster may recover from his madness enough to escape from the asylum to reclaim his property. Locked away though he is, no asylum can hold the mad wizard for long once he recovers, and he will certainly want words with those who ended his son's life and, more importantly, destroyed the *Black Egg*.

Finally, although many of the higher-ranking members may have perished

Synder

during the course of this adventure, the threat of the Black Covenant remains. This large, secretive and very powerful group becomes decidedly unhappy with anyone who disrupts their plans for the *Black Egg*, and they decide to launch a personal vendetta against the PCs, Tobias Frost, or both.

APPENDIX: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

THE *BLOOD CLAW* (MINOR ARTIFACT)

The *blood claw* is a short rod, one end of which is carved to resemble the claw of a red dragon. It has no functional properties as a weapon.

If touched to the body of a dragon that has been dead for no more than 2 minutes, the *claw* absorbs the creature's soul as a *soul bind* spell, with the *blood claw* itself serving as the receptacle. The soul cannot be restored to its body unless the *claw* is destroyed or the wielder of the *claw* wills the soul back into the original body (which must be touched by the *blood claw*). The *blood claw* can hold up to 57 Hit Dice of draconic souls at once; excess souls are lost.

The wielder of the *blood claw* can release captured souls into the *Black Egg* as a standard action, as long as the *claw* is touching the *Egg*. The claw feeds souls to the *Egg* in groups of 19 Hit Dice or levels; fractions of 19 or levels or Hit Dice in excess of 19 are lost.

The *blood claw* has AC 9, hardness 20, 60 hit points, and a break DC of 30.

Strong necromancy; CL 20th; Weight 5 lb.

THE *BLACK EGG* (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

This smooth, jet black egg-shaped stone is about 6 feet tall and 3 feet around. Legends say it was originally carved from the heart of a hellfire wyrm that had been transmuted into iron. The *Black Egg* is wrought of cold black steel, with a significant-sized chip removed from its face.

The Black Egg

The very touch of the *Black Egg* corrupts and compels. Any creature that makes physical contact with the *Egg* must succeed at a Will Save (DC 30) or their alignment becomes chaotic evil and they seek to use the power of the *Black Egg* to wreak havoc

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

Although designed for a party of 12th-level characters, "The Black Egg" can easily be adapted for parties of higher or lower level. As written, "The Black Egg" is a challenging adventure; to keep the same general level of challenge regardless of the PCs' level, the following changes are recommended:

9th to 10th-level PCs

- All NPCs with class levels should have their class levels reduced by one or two.
- Change Korakkus to a half-dragon frost giant.
- Make the hydra in area **2** a standard hydra.
- Make the stone golem in area **3** a standard, two-armed stone golem.
- Replace the bodaks in area **4** with wraiths.
- The *Black Egg* now creates juvenile half-fiend red dragons.

12th to13th-level PCs

"The Black Egg" should still provide significant challenge for PCs of this level, provided the characters don't mind having a fairly easy start with things. Rest assured, the danger level increases very quickly. If, however, the DM wishes to provide a greater challenge for higher-level characters, make the following changes:

- Increase all NPC class levels by one or two.
- Give Korakkus one or two levels of fighter.
- Change the pyrohydra in area **2** into a half-red dragon pyrohydra.
- Change the four-armed stone golem in area **3** to a four-armed iron golem.
- Increase the number of bodaks in area **4** to 6.
- Add some gnarled and twisted trees to area **6** for the poison tree to animate.
- The *Black Egg* now creates adult half-fiend red dragons.

Naturally, increasing or decreasing the difficulty of this adventure should also alter the amount of treasure found.

and to selfishly safeguard it from all other creatures. The *Black Egg* only submits to powerful allies. If a creature with 9 or fewer Hit Dice tries to claim the *Black Egg* as its own, the Egg attempts to *disintegrate* the target (Fortitude save DC 22). The range for this effect is touch, and only the Egg itself can choose to activate it, up to once per round, as a free action.

For every 19 Hit Dice worth of souls fed to the *Black Egg* by the *blood claw* or a *soul bind* spell, the *Black Egg* produces a single young adult half-fiend red dragon that is under the complete control of the *Black Egg* (as manifested through the Egg's current "owner"); this control spans even planar boundaries. The half-fiend dragon serves faithfully until it or the *Black Egg* is destroyed. If the owner of the *Black Egg* is slain and has no blood relatives, the half-fiend dragon becomes free-willed.

The curse of the *Black Egg* is insidious. If its current owner fails to feed it any souls over the course of a year, its taint spreads to the most closely related blood relative of the prior owner, who must then make a successful Will Save (DC 30) to avoid the same obsession with the *Black Egg*. Victims must continue to make this saving throw once every week as long as the *Black Egg* exists.

The intelligence in the *Black Egg* (likely the undead soul of the hellfire wyrm from which it spawned) is lawful evil and has the following mental ability scores: Int 23, Wis 26, and Cha 28. It can speak with its owner via telepathy, and has the following skills: Bluff +26, Diplomacy +32, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (history) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, and Knowledge (the planes) +31. It has an ego of 28.

Although the *Black Egg* is a major artifact, it is possible to destroy it by inflicting enough damage. The Egg has AC 3, hardness 20, 600 hp, and a Break DC of 40. All hit point damage done to the Black Egg is healed each time it creates a half-fiend dragon.

Young Adult Half-Fiend Red Dragon: CR 16; Huge outsider (fire, native); HD 19d12+114; hp 237; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +19; Grp +39; Atk +26 melee (2d8+12, bite); Full Atk +26 melee (2d8+12, bite) and +24 melee (2d6+6, 2 claws) and +24 melee (1d8+6, 2 wings) and +24 melee (2d6+18, tail slap) or +26 melee (2d8+18, crush); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (DC 26), frightful presence (DC 22), smite good 1/day (+19 damage), spells, spell-like abilities; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immune to fire, immune to poison, immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, keen senses, *locate object*, resistance to acid 10, resistance to cold 10, resistance to electricity 10, spell resistance 29, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +13; Str 35, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 16.

Skills: Appraise +26, Bluff +25, Concentration +28, Diplomacy +5, Escape Artist +24, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Knowledge (the planes) +26, Listen +26, Search +26, Sense Motive +24, Spot +26, Use Rope +2 (+4 bindings).

Feats: Alertness, Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch.

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Draconic, Giant, Infernal.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*darkness, poison, unholy aura*; 1/day—*blasphemy, contagion, desecrate, destruction, horrid wilting, summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow, unholy blight.*

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/5; save DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, detect magic, flare, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, shield, true strike*; 2nd—*bull's strength, mirror image.*

Skills: Bluff +24, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist +22, Jump +29, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Listen +23, Search +21, Spellcraft +21, Spot +23. Ω

Steven Montano has been torturing players with his published adventures since the fall of 2001. Currently, he is trying to throw together a game near his new Washington home while he struggles to keep up with the most terrifying monster of them all...a 2-year-old. Deposit any insults at daezarkian13@hotmail.com.

Bolt and Quiver

by Stan!

IN THE REVISED ADVENTURER'S HANDBOOK IT SAYEST THAT THOU CAN NO LONGER USE MY SHORT SWORD WITHOUT PENALTY. AS A REPLACEMENT, USE THIS SMALL-SIZED LONGSWORD.
IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME THING!
'TIS NOT TRUE. BEFORE, THOU WAS MAKING ADJUSTMENTS AND ADAPTATIONS TO A BLADE BUILT FOR LARGER HANDS. THE GRIP WAS UNWIELDY. THE BALANCE WAS UNCERTAIN.
Stan!
THIS BLADE WAS DESIGNED BY DIMINUTIVE ARTISANS TO BE PERFECTLY SUITED FOR A WARRIOR OF JUST YOUR STATURE.
well... it IS a nice sword...
GOOD! THEN THOU WON'T MIND REASSIGNING A FEAT SLOT TO BECOME PROFICIENT IN ITS USE!
BOLT, YOU DO REALIZE THAT THIS TIME I'M HOLDING A WEAPON
AYE. BUT THOU ART 4 POINTS LESS LIKELY TO HIT!
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VOLKAG

SUMMONER OF DEATH

BY JAMES WILBER
ARTWORK BY NIKLAAS JANSSEN

During the recent Greyhawk Wars, tribes of orcs, goblins, and other savage humanoids surged forth from the Empire of Iuz and the hills of the Pomarj.

When the war ended, many of these creatures found themselves trapped behind enemy lines. Forced to retreat to wild places like the Vesve, the Gnarley Forest, and the Lortmil Mountains, the savage humanoids established hidden strongholds from which they still wage a guerrilla war against their enemies.

One such guerrilla warrior is Volkag, a devout orc worshipper of Nerull who uses trickery to disguise himself as a cleric of Grumsh One-Eye. Under cover of night, Volkag travels from enclave to enclave, offering the desperate humanoids a final chance to strike back against their hated foes. If the enclaves offer up some of their number to be sacrificed to the glory of He Who Never Sleeps, Volkag promises to cast *lesser planar ally* to summon demons to bolster the enclave's forces for a final, explosive fight.

Few demons can resist such a tempting offer. Most agree readily to Volkag's instructions to lay waste to the surrounding countryside, and the resulting carnage brings great honor to Volkag's true patron, Nerull the Reaper, champion of death, darkness, and murder. The demon's coming bolsters most enclaves, who often join the creature for a final attack, crippling a goodly village in a self-destructive explosion of violence. Thereafter, Volkag departs to seek out another enclave, spreading Nerull's glory and bringing hope to the hopeless.

An impressive, muscular orc, Volkag wears his hair long and braided, with bits of bone woven in. He takes great pains to appear as a cleric of Grumsh, wearing that deity's holy symbol and using his ranks in Bluff and Disguise to skillfully pull off the deception. He even wields a magical spear in the likeness of his alleged master.

TACTICS

Volkag understands that the forces of good are

strong. He remains constantly on the move as a result, looking for more savage humanoid enclaves to manipulate. If ambushed, Volkag is more likely to run than stand and fight, using *word of recall* to return to his secret lair in the Pomarj.

If given sufficient time to plan an attack, Volkag summons as many demons as possible to fight for him. He drinks his *potion of invisibility*, hoping to buy himself enough time to drink his *potion of haste* and *wisdom*. He then casts *summon monster* spells under cover of the *invisibility*. Before personally entering melee, he places a strategic *wall of stone* to divide his enemies.

DEVELOPMENT

There are many ways a party of adventurers can come across Volkag's handiwork. They may discover that a group of orcs they have been tracking have suddenly disappeared. Upon finding their lair, they discover all of the orcs dead, seemingly by their own hands. The PCs might be lulled into thinking that they have a new ally until they unexpectedly encounter demons rampaging through the neighboring countryside, supported by the few surviving orcs who fight as if Gruumsh himself stood by their side.

Alternatively, the party can be charged with transporting a band of orc prisoners from one rural outpost to another. Volkag tries to infiltrate the prisoners, posing as one of the captives in hopes of convincing them to sacrifice themselves to bring honor to He Who Never Sleeps and to bring forth a demon to wreak vengeance upon the orcs' captors. If the PCs fail to discover his plot in time, they not only end up with a handful of demons attacking them, but are held accountable for the deaths of the prisoners.

Volkag has many enemies amongst his own people. Both Iuz and the Turrosh Mak see Volkag as a threat to the morale of their troops and their continued operations within enemy territory. The church of Gruumsh has branded him a heretic and actively seeks his death. All three of these groups have sent assassins after him, and doubtless will continue to do so in the future. Will the PCs see these assassins as yet another enemy, or will they look to exchange information? How willing are they to cooperate with a band of orc assassins, especially after Volkag is dead? Ω

Volkag: Summoner of Death

12th-level Male Orc Cleric of Nerull: CR 12; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 12d8+60; hp 132; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (1d8+6/×3, *+2 longspear*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+6/×3, *+2 longspear*); SA death touch, rebuke/command undead (+2 synergy bonus to rebuke/command checks), spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Skills: Concentration +15, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +6, Disguise +12 (+14 acting), Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +9.

Feats: Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (longspear).

Languages: Abyssal, Common, Orc.

Spells Prepared (6/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, guidance* (2), *resistance*; 1st—*cause fear, command, cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*, obscuring mist, sanctuary*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds, darkness, death knell*, hold person, silence, sound burst*; 3rd—*blindness/deafness, contagion, cure serious wounds, invisibility purge, nondetection*, summon monster III*; 4th—*cure critical wounds, freedom of movement, lesser planar ally, summon monster VI, unholy blight**; 5th—*flame strike, slay living*, summon monster V, wall of stone*; 6th—*create undead*, planar ally, word of recall.*

* Domain spell. *Domains:* Death (death touch 1/day, damage 12d6), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Possessions: +3 full plate, +2 longspear, +2 bracers of health, broach of shielding, +2 cloak of resistance, Potions: bull's strength, wisdom, invisibility, haste, fly; scroll of heal, 146 gp, 20 pp.

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Polyhedron 165

RPGA NETWORK

d20 system

Release Roundup

The d20 publishing machine keeps on cranking out dozens of releases a month. With new books choking the shelves at the local game store and production values increasing across the board, it's become very difficult to determine which products are worth getting, and which will be headed to eBay about 12 minutes after you crack the cover. Here in the musty offices of *Polyhedron*, piles of new d20 products accumulate like crested felldrakes and wolves in a case of D&D Miniatures. We read most of these books, and have a decent idea of which ones are worth checking out. Listen to us. We're here to help.

Illustration by Rey Lewis

Modern Player's Companion (The Game Mechanics/Green Ronin Publishing)

Author: Stan! (with Rich Redman and Charles Ryan)
Format: 80 black-and-white pages, perfect bound
Price: $16.95

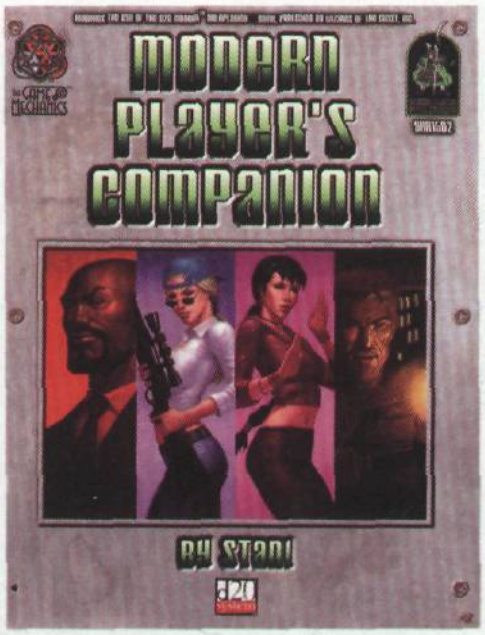
Even after 3 years, most d20 System designers don't quite seem as comfortable with the d20 rules as the folks at Wizards of the Coast, who after all work with the system every single day. Green Ronin (itself the product of WotC alum Chris Pramas) touts its line as "d20 done right," a claim made much easier by the fact that its list of freelancers reads like a "who's who" of current and former Wizards professionals (including, in the interest of full disclosure, the staff of this magazine).

Their latest release, the *Modern Player's Companion*, continues the "d20 done right" tradition, even making the authors' familiarity with the *d20 Modern* design team one of the book's foremost selling points: "The *Modern Player's Companion* is designed with the same principles, decisions, and guidelines that the original [*d20 Modern*] designers used. We know this because it is written, edited, and produced by people who were involved in creating the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* and the *Urban Arcana* Campaign Setting."

They aren't kidding. The book's primary author, Stan!, has a cover credit on Urban Arcana and provided "design assistance and advice" to the *d20 Modern* designers when he worked at Wizards. Rich Redman, who offers "additional design" for the *Modern Player's Companion*, designed a great deal of the *d20 Modern* game, and it doesn't hurt to have *d20 Modern* super-guru and WotC RPG Category Manager Charles Ryan as a "proofreader" (would that we were so lucky).

This kind of design cred brings with it a remarkable approach to rules design that almost perfectly matches that taken in official *d20 Modern* products. Nothing in the *Modern Player's Companion* will destroy the balance of your campaign, and only the book's black and white art and trade dress differentiate it from a full-blown Wizards release. New rules nicely supplement those in the official books, and several sidebars go out of their way to explain controversial or confusing elements of the core *d20 Modern* rules. These sidebars range from insightful and interesting ("Why Only 10 Levels in Basic Classes?") to unsettlingly defensive ("Why Wealth Works"), but generally add a "here's why we do it this way" quality that only people who know what they're talking about can truly provide. Anyone who loved the "Behind the Curtain" sidebars in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* will want to get this book, if only to get into the heads of talented and knowledgeable game designers.

The *Companion* opens with a chapter on characters, with several new talent trees to help you better customize the game's basic classes. The best of these is the Adapt talent, which allows a Smart hero to learn from combat failures (gaining a dodge bonus against a previously successful enemy) or improve her chances using an Intelligence-based skill. The chapter also includes seven new occupations, ranging from bohemian to politico, which fill more specific niches than most of the occupations presented in the core rules. Not all are created equal—the politico has a game balance edge over her bohemian sister, but isn't quite as good as the entrepreneur of the core rules. In this way, perhaps *d20 Modern* is *too* realistic.



Judging by the defensiveness of the section on Wealth, a lot of *d20 Modern* players want to see a less abstract system for buying stuff, something the *Companion's* designers dutifully (if grudgingly) provide. The new system's complexity will do little to convince anyone pleased with the current Wealth rules to make the switch, which was probably their intent.

New players who feel daunted by the openness of *d20 Modern's* character class system will appreciate a section on how to build such diverse characters as pro athletes, reporters, and rock stars using a combination of the game's basic classes. Experienced players will flock to the book's 14 advanced classes (including the Arcane Scholar, with "tome lore" that seems fitting for a character based on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* Rupert Giles). The usual assortment of prestige classes includes the Commander (who supports allies and rattles enemies from a distance), the Master Tinkerer (who can build awesome robots), the Psionic Assassin (who receives an easily-concealable psychic knife), and the Silent Intruder (who shares many abilities of D&D's shadowdancer and adds his level on Disable Device checks).

Notable among the book's dozens of new feats are Back Off (take a free 5-foot step instead of an attack of opportunity), Bull's Eye (spend an action point to automatically confirm a ranged critical), Lucky (spend an action point to reroll a d20), and Self Improvement (raise one ability score permanently by +1). A bit of cultural sensitivity sure to be appreciated by non-Americans involves a subtle change to the game's language rules. An optional Multilingual feat essentially gives the GM carte blanche to give starting characters as many Speak Language and Read/Write Language abilities as needed for the campaign. No longer must Dutch player characters choose only one of their nation's 37 languages!

Those of you begging for d20 rules for fanny packs and fishing rods will love the *Companion's* brief equipment chapter, which also includes information for multi-function PDA/cellphones, portable hard drives, and encyclopedias. There's nothing earthshaking, here, but players love to shop and will appreciate subtle touches such as rules for researching with a library collection.

A great (and often funny) chapter on new FX Abilities provides gems like *fast food* (which summons a pre-bagged take-out meal from an existing restaurant, complete with plastic fork and napkins) and *personal soundtrack*, which plays a musical theme or sound effect every time the caster takes a specific action. Wonderful.

The *Modern Player's Companion* (along with the previously published *Ultramodern Firearms*) makes Green Ronin (to say nothing of The Game Mechanics) the company to watch for excellent unofficial modern-era d20 material.—Erik Mona

Bolt and Quiver by Stan!

SO. THE WARRIORS OF THE CODE NOT ONLY RENAMED AND RECATEGORIZED MY PRIMARY WEAPON, BUT NOW I HAVE TO TAKE A FEAT JUST TO REMAIN PROFICIENT IN ITS USE?
'TIS ONLY FAIR, MY ENRAGED COMPATRIOT.
FAIR?
AYE. IN THE PAST YOU USED A WEAPON THAT WAS PROPORTIONALLY THE SIZE OF A LONGSWORD, BUT BECAUSE OF ITS NAME YOU GOT TO USE IT WITHOUT ANY REAL SPECIALIZATION.
MARTIAL WEAPONS ARE DANGEROUS, QUIVER. THE REVISED ADVENTURER'S HANDBOOK SIMPLY REQUIRES THAT YOU HAVE THE PROPER TRAINING AND PRACTICE BEFORE WIELDING SUCH A WEAPON SAFELY.
OH, I'M MORE THAN WILLING TO PRACTICE!
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'STRUTH! I DID NOT KNOW YOU HAD TAKEN SO MANY LEVELS IN BARBARIAN!
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Mighty, Mighty Goodman

A Chat with the Mad Genius of Goodman Games

A *Polyhedron* Interview

ACROSS THE CONVENTION AISLE, middle-aged men do double-takes at a wargaming booth, eager to learn more about a puzzle featuring the surgical miracle of one of Comedy Central's "juggies," Playboy-style bimbos best known for skimpy outfits and trampoline routines. On our side of the hall, bright-faced gamers approach a simple display of stacked books, sorting through titles like *The Complete Guide to Liches*, *Idylls of the Rat King*, *Dave Arneson's Blackmoor*, and *Broncosaurus Rex* while lauding the booth's proprietor with praise. There's a friendly, personal touch to their comments, as if the customers were talking to an friend, even a favorite Dungeon Master.

The man responsible (almost single-handedly responsible) for their comments is Joe Goodman, a young publisher who jumped into the d20 industry in the early days with a quirky game mixing the American Civil War, dinosaurs, and rayguns. In the years since, he's built Goodman Games into a reliable enterprise that never shirks from providing slightly off-beat products in an increasingly homogenized marketplace.

We recently met up with Joe at a national game convention to ask him about his company, his unique approach to publishing, and his his plans for the future.

What the hell were you thinking mixing dinosaurs and the Civil War?

I don't know. It just seemed like a good idea at the time, you know? I was reading these comic books that got me thinking about dinosaurs. Nobody had done a dinosaur game. Ricardo Delgado does a comic called *Age of Reptiles*, where the dinosaurs are highly intelligent, tribal, and pseudoreligious. They have emotions. No words, though. The entire comic, it's all visuals. He does a great job of conveying emotion with dinosaurs.

So I read that and I was like "wow!" This would be awesome for a miniatures game with intelligent tribal velociraptors fighting the T-Rex and their dynasties and so on.

And then I read this other comic called *Blueberry*, one of the longest-running comics ever, in France. Moebius, one of the most famous comic artists ever, got his start doing *Blueberry*. So it's all his early art, with this amazing writer named Charlier. It's like this awesome western. It's the only western comic I like. So I was reading dinosaur comics here and westerns there.

> **"...I was recovering on Vicodin... that's when I actually did all the writing... that's where some of the more unusual stuff started appearing."**

One day I was hanging out or something and I had this image of a Confederate soldier on a T-Rex charging into battle with the stars and bars fluttering in the wind behind him bearing down on the plains toward a Union hovertank. I don't know where it came from, but I was like "that's it!" And that's how it got started.

Then I had surgery, and I was recovering on Vicodin, which is a really powerful painkiller. And that's when I actually did all the writing, so I think that's where some of the more unusual stuff started appearing.

What's been the response to *Broncosaurus Rex*?

People either love it or they hate it. Some people are like, "This is weird. What the Hell?" And other people, they get this look in their eyes, and they're like, "Woooah! That's cool!"

Are you committed to supporting *Broncosaurus Rex* for a good time to come?

Yes. It is my baby, but I'm also at the point where I don't want to be a vanity press. At a lot of companies, the owner keeps his own stuff in publication because he's the owner. I'm not really into that. So the next step for *Broncosaurus Rex* is a comic book, not the d20 stuff.

What's the next step for Goodman Games?

What I want to do is innovative, original products. But it takes a while to come up with them. And there has to be something to fill the gaps between. So *Broncosaurus Rex* was weird idea #1. Right now I'm working on weird idea #2, which is *Dragonmech*. Medieval fantasy mechs powered by steam. There will be other weird ones, and in between those spaces will be fantasy products, trying to take an original twist on them, like evil treants or good liches.

Instead of your traditional good treant aiding the forest, the cover of the Complete *Guide to Treants* pictures an evil fiery treant trying to raze a farmer's field and beat the crap out of him. The prem-

ise of the book is that it covers treant psychology. You're hanging out in this forest, you protect this forest, you live there for like 5000 years. What happens if someone screws you over and destroys your forest? You become schizophrenic or psychotic, but you're a treant. So it has rules for these messed-up treants who go around screwing stuff up. Evil treants.

There's a lot of fantasy products out now. There are even a lot of products out there that are like the "guide to goblins," or whatever. What makes your products different than everyone else doing them in the hobby right now?

I think partially that I don't rely on traditional fantasy stereotypes or archetypes. I actually haven't read a lot of fantasy literature, just because my personal reading interests aren't there. So personally, I couldn't write a book about treants, or if I did I'd have to make a lot of stuff up which probably wouldn't jibe with a traditional fantasy genre. So when I ask a writer to do a book on that subject, I ask him to come back with something that's really different, that I wouldn't have thought of, and that's something unique. There are a lot of other companies who do a really good job when they're doing an orc book or a goblin book, but when I read it...I'm also older, and a lot of gamers are younger, and this might be for them the first exposure to "Ooh! This is what an orc is." But for somebody who's older and who's, you know, heard about orcs for a while, you're like "Uggh. An orc."

If I did an orc book they'd be like purple and fight with mushrooms or something.

What's the next crazy idea?

The one that I'm working most actively on is *Dragonmech*, whose tagline is "Medieval fantasy mechs powered by steam, magic, or the labor of a thousand slaves." The world got started as a traditional fantasy world, but basically the moon collapsed onto the planet. Got pulled into the planet's orbit and razed the planet's surface in what was called the Lunar Rain, which was basically a nightly meteor storm. The surface was devastated, totally desolate. All the surface dwellers had to fight to go under ground to pursue safety, because there was no safety from the Lunar Rain when it was at its worst. Over a long period of time, they established massive wars underground, as people fought for space in a limited area. But an ancient dwarf came forth from the subterranean depths. He said he traveled a thousand miles, and he came to Dwaeroth, the dwarven capital, and said that in ages past, Dwaeroth had aided the Gearwright's Guild, and he had come to repay the favor. The eldest dwarves remembered their grandfathers telling stories of their grandfathers telling stories about the Gearwright's Guild, but nobody had any direct recollection of them.

But this guild was these sort of crazy, bizarre steampunk guys who built mechs. So the dwarves learned how to build mechs out of big coal furnaces belching forth black gusts of smoke and so on. And they developed these mechs with these thick metal skins that could walk the earth even under the Lunar Rain. So the dwarves took to the surface again. The elves followed suit with magically animated mechs. The orcs built these really crude replicas that involved slaves turning wheels and stuff because they didn't have the intelligence to use steam power.

From there you get a world populated by mechs. The world's basic social unit has become the mech, because on the surface there is no other way for survival, so you have city mechs, which are the height of a skyscraper housing thousands of people who wander the surface, with little mech fleets that deploy from their shins and patrol the ground.

One other crazy idea is called *Pimps in Space*, which might never see the light of day. It involves the plant Pimpulon. It's very fun. The best part is that the mystical force is called not the Force, but the Fros. It includes rules for afros, and the barber NPC class...if your afro is a 10th-level afro, you have to have a 10th-level barber or else you might mess up your Fros. But that one might never see the light of day.

Do you ever get bored reading other companies' d20 stuff?

Yeah, sometimes. Yes.

There seems to be a method to your madness. What is it?

Just doing stuff different. I like to do stuff that's different, that people will remember, and say "oh yeah, that was pretty cool," and they don't confuse it with the other books by other companies.

Do you think there are other companies out there who have a similar philosophy, who are doing interesting, innovative stuff?

Yeah, definitely. Privateer Press does amazing stuff. They're heavily focused on the visuals, but the concepts are really good, too. Green Ronin does great work. They focus on fantasy, but they do interesting fantasy, like the *Avatar's Handbook*, or *Fang and Fury*, which was about vampires, but they didn't just say "be a vampire." They created a new sort of vampire spawn, or scion-to-be, but yeah, there are definitely others, too. There are a lot of companies doing cool stuff. This is a creative industry.

Do you plan to be here for a long time?

Yeah, I have a 40-year business plan.

40 years?

Yeah. Publishing is stage one.

What's Stage 2?

I cannot talk about it at this time. ●

Living Greyhawk™

Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron—Cuthbertine proverb

Campaign Director: Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Contributing Reporter: Jason Bulmahn

Sea of Dust at Winter Fantasy

Last year, WINTER FANTASY provided a rare opportunity to duke it out with the drow in their infernal vault. This year is your chance to explore the ruins of an empire burned to dust by the rain of colorless fire. Although little remains, a malignance still broods under the dust, waiting to be discovered. Heroes who succeed in this event will be entered into a random drawing for the chance to take home a relic from this ancient empire, no doubt powerful items the likes of which have not been seen in countless years. Don't miss out on this rare opportunity. Heroes who wish to play in this event would do well to play COR3-16: *Lerara*. Still want more? Here's the official blurb:

COR4-S01: ***Sea of Dust***, by the Circle: "Time is the fire in which we burn." Those words echo in your head as you stare across the endless Sea of Dust before you. The mighty Suel empire, feared by all, once stood here. Now the fire that burns has washed it clean and time has buried and forgotten it. Sometimes things best left forgotten do not remain so and things thought long dead and swept away in the fires of time return. The shifting winds and dust have revealed a ruined city deep in the Sea of Dust. Time to grab the shovels and see what lurks beneath the ashes of empire. A Core Special scenario for APLs 2–16. This scenario will only be available for play at WINTER FANTASY 2004.

And look for these other great events at WINTER FANTASY:

COR4-01: ***Shedding Scales***, by Shawn Merwin. A knightly order dedicated to stopping a nameless evil, a mysterious sect of an ancient Suel goddess, and a diviner charged with undoing a diabolical ritual. These diverse forces struggle to end a threat in the cradle of the former Occluded Empire of the Whispered One. Is the danger confined to a backwater barony on the edge of the Rushmoors, or is something more at stake? An adventure for APLs 2–12. Part One of the "Windows to the Serpent's Soul" series.

COR4-02: ***The Stone Man's Puzzle***, by Ron Lundeen. The town of Hardby was in complete disarray when you arrived. The courthouse was broken into and the accused whisked away by a giant man of stone. The tracks should be easy enough to follow, but who would want to spirit away a mere bookkeeper? An adventure for APLs 6–10.

COR4-03: ***Tropical Intrigue***, by Michael McKeown. In the taverns of the Free City of Greyhawk, stories have passed down over the years of a shipwrecked adventuring party that explored the Amedio Hook 18 years ago. Unfortunately, the area is now controlled by the Scarlet Sign. Your patron wants to know more. She asks for volunteers for a journey across the Azure Sea. Not another sea voyage! An adventure for APLs 2–12.

3.5 is Here

By now, your new-and-improved 3.5 version of your hero should be ready to take on the world. While all of the adventures premiering after October 1st, 2003 are written for the 3.5 rule set, those from before that date will require a conversion. For regionals and meta-regional adventures, the conversion sheets can be found in PDF form right along with the adventures themselves at www.living-greyhawk.com, using the same password to open. Your triad can provide the conversion sheet for core adventures. Since you now get four 3.5 vrocks for the same EL as one 3.0 vrock, these conversions can make the difference between your players yawning and your players running from the dance of ruin!

Region News

It's been an exciting year for the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign. Some of the most fantastic growth for the campaign has occurred in Europe, where the regions of Dullstrand (Switzerland) and Naerie (Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden) have put out their first adventures while Knurl (Greece) has become active again and should begin putting out adventures soon. Next time you are in Europe, check out the region you are traveling to, as there might just be a game to pick up on the way.

On a sad note, the Circle has decided to fold the region of Ratik (Hawaii) into Nyrond (Southern California, Utah, and Arizona). All Ratik PCs will automatically become citizens of Nyrond as of February 1st, 2004. All Ratik adventures will still be playable in Hawaii until they retire as normal.

Enchiridion of the Fiend-Sage:

BEASTS OF THE SCARLET BROTHERHOOD

Living Greyhawk

By Paul Looby and Stuart Kerrigan
Illustration by UDON

Fireseek, 594 CY

My Deathless Suzerain,

I note with some satisfaction that the Dweomermasters have finally desisted in their futile, if irritating, scrying. It is my sincere hope that Iskendred the Seer's defenestration did not overly inconvenience the traffic in the street below.

Communication between Ountsy and Kalstrand has resumed this past month. Most interestingly, the Trine's Court initiated contact on this occasion. I have thus far been unable to trace the messages back to Emmara herself, but in this I see the hand of that bothersome man Svencer. With your permission I can give him a glimpse of the visions that sent Iskendred out for a breath of air, as it were. In the meantime I would recommend placing a careful watch upon the comings and goings from the Temple of Zilchus and the judicious application of torture upon those priests acting as couriers for this seditious correspondence. If you think it politic, I have methods that will leave no (visible) scars.

I enclose some notes on several interesting creatures for your edification, including some inspiring examples of the breeding projects undertaken by the deluded Brothers of the Scarlet Sign.

Your ever diligent scholar,

The Fiend-Sage
Rl Astra

Yeshir (Halfling hound)

Medium Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 3d10+2 (19 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), burrow 20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5
Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2 plus poison)
Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2 plus poison) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d4+1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Fear aura, poison
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., scent
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10
Skills: Hide +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +7, Survival +4 (+8 when tracking by scent)
Feats: Alertness, Track[B], Run
Environment: Any land
Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (5–20)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium-size); 6–9 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment: —

An Asperdi sea captain presented me with a pair of these fine beasts as partial repayment of a debt (the souls of the man's pleasingly large brood of children forming the balance). I am endeavoring to formulate a gas from the venom, which you may find useful in flushing the hobniz vermin of the Grandwood from their burrows. The blind terror that the hounds strike in the heart of halflings is really quite invigorating to behold and adds a delectable piquancy to their meat.

Yeshirs (halfling hounds) are large hounds bred centuries ago by the princes of the Suel Imperium for the express purpose of hunting, tracking and killing halfings.

Large and heavily-built hounds, yeshirs typically stand about 3–4 feet at the shoulder and weigh about 150 pounds. Their heavy bristly coat is often brown, black, or gray. They have a broad, blunt head, heavily muscled neck, and powerful front legs with long claws equally efficient at digging prey out of their burrows and rending flesh.

Halfling meat was considered a delicacy in the last centuries of the Suel Imperium. The decadent nobility used yeshirs to run hobniz to ground and dig them out of their burrows using their large front paws. Suel migrants brought the dogs to the Flanaess a millennium ago and the beasts have spread widely since. Yeshirs are not generally kept in lands that enjoy good relations with halflings, as the hobniz understandably loathe them. Many Aerdi nobles possess yeshirs, and the Naelax overkings reportedly revived the "sport" of hunting hobniz with horse and hounds. The purest yeshir bloodlines dwell in the realm of Shar, where the Scarlet Brotherhood preserves both the breed and the malign tradition of their forebears.

Yeshirs are usually kept in domesticated (if still fierce) hunting packs. However, the Scarlet Brotherhood has released a number of feral packs in the lands of the Iron League to terrorize local hobniz populations.

Combat

Yeshirs have keen senses and can efficiently track prey by scent, sight, or sound. Though not the swiftest of hounds, and incapable of sustained bursts of speed, their strength, patience and cunning more than make up for this. Bred to track a sentient foe, yeshirs are sly beasts and often cooperate in pairs or a pack to isolate and surround or ambush their prey. If they run their prey to ground, they surround the burrow, covering any possible escape routes. One or two hounds then move up and begin digging out the trapped hobniz, one dog watching over the other, protecting it from attack.

Yeshirs usually attempt to bite with their poisonous fangs, following up with rending swipes with its powerful front claws. Yeshir venom is effective on other creatures, but halflings are particularly sensitive to its effects. The hounds attempt to immobilize all opponents as quickly as possible. If the pack meets strong opposition, they retreat, attempting to drag any immobilized prey away with them.

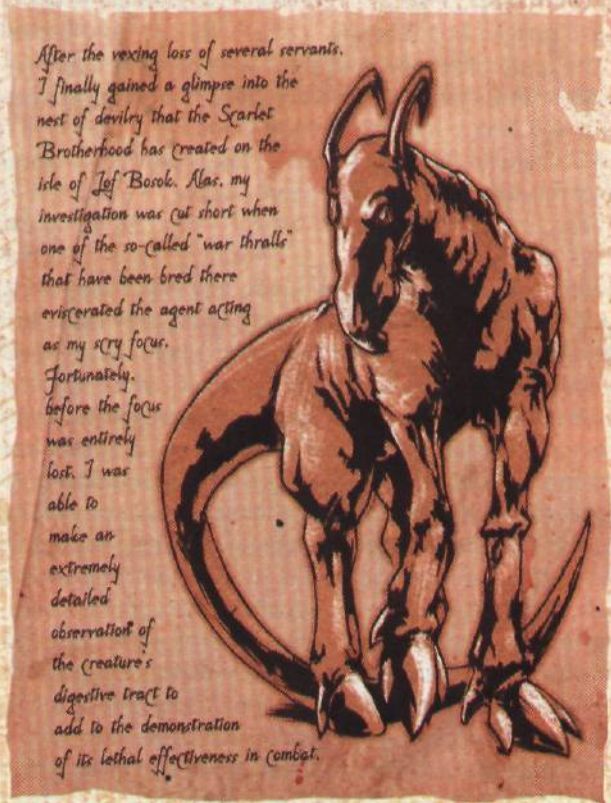
Fear Aura (Su): In the presence of a yeshir, halflings must make a successful Will save (DC 11) or become panicked. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Bite, Fortitude DC 12, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based. Halflings are particularly susceptible to yeshir venom. They take a –2 penalty on saves agaisnt this poison and take double damage to their Dexterity from the poison.

Skills: Yeshirs receive a +1 racial bonus on Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks, and a +2 racial bonus on Hide checks. Additionally, yeshirs gain a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Mazchedeen (Tunnel-hunters)

Medium Aberration
Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class: 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5
Attack: Bite +5 melee (2d6+2)
Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (2d6+2) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d4+1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Acid spit
Special Qualities: Blindsight 60 ft., camouflage, Suel failsafe
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10
Skills: Hide +18, Listen +3, Move Silently +8
Feats: Improved Natural Attack (bite), Stealthy
Environment: Any underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (5–20)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always lawful neutral
Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large); 9–12 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: +3


After the vexing loss of several servants, I finally gained a glimpse into the nest of devilry that the Scarlet Brotherhood has created on the isle of Tef Bosok. Alas, my investigation was cut short when one of the so-called "war thralls" that have been bred there eviscerated the agent acting as my scry focus. Fortunately, before the focus was entirely lost, I was able to make an extremely detailed observation of the creature's digestive tract to add to the demonstration of its lethal effectiveness in combat.

Mazchedeens (tunnel-hunters) are specially bred through the foul sorcery of the Scarlet Brotherhood to fight in the subterranean cavern networks of dwarves and gnomes.

Sleek quadrupeds with powerfully muscled limbs, mazchedeens can run and climb on all fours, but frequently rear onto their back legs to rake foes with their cruelly curved fore-claws. Their long, horse-like heads have

two vestigial eyes and a pair of slit nostrils set above an extensive, fanged maw. Despite being sightless, mazchedeens can navigate and locate foes without difficulty in complete darkness. Tunnel-hunters have extremely thick, rough, pigmented hide, which can change color to blend into the creature's surroundings, making them very difficult to spot when they are motionless.

Mazchedeens are thought to be one of the products of the Scarlet Brotherhood's diabolical monster breeding program. As such, they can understand commands in Ancient Suloise, but only if issued with a priming control phrase, known to the creature's Brotherhood masters alone. Moreover, tunnel-hunters have been conditioned not to initiate combat with humans of pure Suel ancestry—a failsafe to prevent the creatures turning on their creators. It is a mystery how the sightless creatures discern Suel from other humans.

The Brotherhood uses the tunnel-hunters as shock troops to suppress the usually fierce resistance encountered in dwur and noniz settlements. Tales from Irongate and the Hollow Highlands tell of creatures bearing a striking resemblance to mazchedeens wreaking bloody havoc in clanholds and settlements in the years following the Greyhawk Wars. They are also used as "watchdogs" at the gates to sensitive Brotherhood strongholds, where their ability to distinguish non-Suel humans has been the undoing of many a would-be spy.

The reproductive cycle of the mazchedeen is unknown and it is unclear what differences, if any, there are between male and female mazchedeeen.

Mazchedeens have no spoken language, but can comprehend commands issued in Ancient Suloise.

Combat

Mazchedeens are dangerous opponents, capable of using guile and tactics to undo their foes. Alone, they make full use of their climbing ability and natural camouflage to lay in wait and ambush unsuspecting targets, often clinging upside down to the roofs of caves and passages and then dropping onto passing victims. In groups, mazchedeens like to swarm over their enemy, using their climbing ability to move over defensive lines, simultaneously overwhelming them and striking at the vulnerable spell-casters behind. In melee, their primary weapon is their vicious and toothy maw. Mazchedeens also make good use of their front claws, rearing up on their hind legs, or dangling down from cavern roofs to rake their victims. Particularly stubborn foes are dealt with by means of acid, secreted by glands in the creature's throat and spat into the faces of enemies.

Spit Acid (Ex): Mazchedeens can spit a 15-foot-long line of acid once every 1d6 rounds. The acid deals 4d4 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 13) halves the damage. This DC is Constitution-based.

Camouflage (Ex): Due to their rough, pigmented hide, mazchedeens gain a +10 racial bonus on Hide checks.

Suel Failsafe (Ex): Mazchedeens are bred not to attack humans of purely Suel origin, unless attacked first.

Dreamstealer

Medium Undead (Incorporeal)
Hit Dice: 6d12 (39 hp)
Initiative: +7
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (12 squares) (good)
Armor Class: 18 (+3 Dex, +5 deflection)
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/—
Attack: Incoporeal touch +3 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Wisdom drain)
Full Attack: Incoporeal touch +3 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Wisdom drain)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Create spawn, wail of doom, wisdom drain
Special Qualities: +2 turn resistance, unnatural aura
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7
Abilities: Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 20
Skills: Hide +11, Intimidate +13, Listen +10, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +10, Tumble +11
Feats: Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative
Environment: Any land
Organization: Solitary, gang (2–5), or pack (6–11)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: 7–18 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

My agent in Irongate has brought to my attention garbled rumors emerging from the Headlands. Explorers have come across strange spirits in the heart of that labyrinth of hills. These spirits can apparently unhinge the minds of those that encounter them, as my contact can well testify to. While he was unsuccessful in his attempts to capture one of these spirits, I was able to piece together a remarkably accurate account of their appearance and behavior from his insane ravings.

Dreamstealers are undead spirits of unknown origin, capable of feeding on the minds of sentient beings, driving their victims insane in the process—those that survive, that is.

Though incorporeal, dreamstealers can manifest themselves as clouds of utter darkness, consisting of a central mass from which continually warping and shifting black

tendrils lash out, often giving the creatures an oddly spider-like appearance. Dreamstealers appear to absorb the light around them, sucking it into their ebon form. They look utterly alien and the sight of them offends the eyes and chills the souls of good-hearted men.

The touch of a dreamstealer is said to bring insanity. Those few that have felt it and lived to tell the tale have been plagued thereafter by terrible nightmares. Dreamstealers can emit a terrible scream that strikes such mortal fear into those that hear it that some die of terror on the spot. They appear to be intelligent and use complex tactics to hunt their prey. Like all undead, they have a burning hatred for all living things.

The origins and purpose of the dreamstealers are unknown. They are mainly encountered in a region of the Headlands known to the local Flan tribes as the Ial Iornadh, the Dreaming Hills (18/H1 on the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* map of the Flanaess). These rugged tors are generally avoided by all of the Headlanders, bar a degenerate and evil tribe known as the Galai Iorn. Hated and reviled by the rest of their kindred, the Galai Iorn are said to be in league with the dreamstealers. Though they appeared to be a localized threat, fearsome spirits bearing a striking resemblance to the dreamstealers of the Headlands have been reported to stalk certain accursed ruins in the Bright Desert.

Combat

Dreamstealers are cunning foes, and like to stalk their prey either alone or in packs. They lurk in dark corners of caverns or in tunnel walls, striking at their victims without warning. However, they can also venture out in daylight and delight in herding victims into ambushes and traps in narrow ravines and box canyons. In combat, dreamstealers soften up and scatter potential prey with their dreadful scream. They then swoop in with their tendrils to engulf their victims and feed on their minds.

Create Spawn (Su): Any creature slain by a dreamstealer rises as a dreamstealer spawn under the control of its killer in 1d4 days.

Wisdom Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a dreamstealer's incorporeal touch attack must succeed at a Will save (DC 18) or take 1d6 points of permanent Wisdom drain. The dreamstealer heals 5 points of damage (10 on a critical hit) whenever it drains Wisdom, gaining any excess as temporary hit points. As long as this damage remains, the afflicted individual suffers from terrible nightmares when he rests, and must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or awaken fatigued. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Wail of Doom (Su): Once per day, a dreamstealer can emit a bloodcurdling wail. All living creatures within a 100-foot spread must make a Will save (DC 18) or take 5d4 points of damage, as well as a –2 morale penalty on saving throws for five rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a dreamstealer at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so. They remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Dreamstealer Spawn (Template)

Dreamstealer spawn are madness made manifest, living creatures consumed by nightmares. Creatures killed by a dreamstealer rise as dreamstealer spawn. Thus, they can take many forms. Dreamstealer spawn appear as inky black clouds that roughly match the form of their original body, from which ebon tendrils constantly writhe.

Dreamstealer spawn can speak the languages they knew in life, but their voices sound high pitched, distorted, and tortured.

Sample Dreamstealer Spawn

Dreamstealer Spawn Hobgoblin Warı
Medium Undead (Augmented Humanoid, Incorporeal)
Hit Dice: 1d12 (6 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (12 squares) (good)
Armor Class: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/—
Attack: Incorporeal touch +0 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Wisdom drain)
Full Attack: Incorporeal touch +0 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Wisdom drain)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Wail of doom, wisdom drain
Special Qualities: +2 turn resistance, darkvision 60 ft., hobgoblin traits, unnatural aura
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0
Abilities: Str —, Dex 13, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14
Skills: Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3
Feats: Alertness
Environment: Any land
Organization: Solitary, gang (2–5), or pack (6–11)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: —

The dreamstealer spawn hobgoblin lurks in ruined hobgoblin villages and ambushes anyone brave enough to explore the haunted buildings.

Combat

Although the dreamstealer spawn hobgoblin retains its prior weapon proficiencies, it almost always fights with its incoporeal touch attack and any special attacks or spells it possessed while living. Even when *ghost touch* weapons are available, the dreamstealer spawn hobgoblin prefers to fight with its deadly touch.

Wail of Doom (Sp): Once per day, the dreamstealer spawn hobgoblin may emit a bloodcurdling scream. All those within a 100-foot spread must make a Will save (DC 12) or suffer 5d4 points of damage as well as a –2 morale penalty on saving throws for 1 round.

Wisdom Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a dreamstealer spawn's incorporeal touch attack must succeed at a Will save (DC 12) or suffer 1d6 points of permanent Wisdom drain. As long as this damage remains, the afflicted individual suffers from terrible nightmares when he rests, and must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or awaken fatigued. The dreamstealer heals 5 points of damage (10 on a critical hit) whenever it drains Wisdom, gaining any excess as temporary hit points.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a dreamstealer spawn hobgoblin at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so. They remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Creating a Dreamstealer spawn

"Dreamstealer spawn" is a template that can be applied to any living corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). It uses the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead, and it gains the incoporeal subtype. Size is unchanged. Do not recalculate base attack bonus or saves.

Hit Dice: All the base creature's Hit Dice become d12s. Do not increase class Hit Dice.

Speed: Dreamstealer spawn gain a fly speed of 60 feet (good), unless the base creature has a better fly speed.

Armor Class: The dreamstealer spawn loses any natural amour bonus the base creature possesses, but it gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus or +1, whichever is higher.

Attacks: The dreamstealer spawn retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those that rely on physical contact become incorporeal touch attacks.

Damage: The dreamstealer spawn's incorporeal touch attack deals 1d4 points of damage as well as any damage from its special attacks (see below).

Special Attacks: The dreamstealer spawn retains all the special attacks of the base creature, except those that rely on physical contact. A dreamstealer spawn gains the wisdom drain and wail of doom abilities described below. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 dreamstealer spawn HD + dreamstealer spawn Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Wisdom Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a dreamstealer spawn's incorporeal touch attack must succeed at a Will save or suffer 1d6 points of permanent Wisdom drain. As long as this damage remains, the afflicted individual suffers from terrible nightmares when he rests, and must make a Fortitude save or awaken fatigued. The dreamstealer spawn heals 5 points of damage (10 on a critical hit) whenever it drains Wisdom, gaining any excess as temporary hit points.

Wail of Doom (Sp): Once per day, the dreamstealer spawn may emit a bloodcurdling scream. All those within a 100-foot spread must make a Will save or suffer 5d4 points of damage or 1d4 points of damage per dreamstealer spawn Hit Dice, whichever is greater. Affected creatures also suffer a -2 morale penalty on saving throws for 1 round per dreamstealer spawn Hit Dice.

Special Qualities: A dreamstealer spawn has all the special qualities of the base creature and the two listed below.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a dreamstealer spawn at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so. They remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A dreamstealer spawn has +2 turn resistance.

Saves: Same as the base creature

Abilities: Same as the base creature, except that the dreamstealer spawn has no Strength or Constitution score, and its Charisma score increases by +4.

Skills: Same as the base creature

Feats: Same as the base creature

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary, gang (2–5), or pack (6–11)

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: Same as the base creature

Level Adjustment: —

Overseer

Tiny Aberration
Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class: 15 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +1/–9
Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d4–2)
Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d4–2)
Space/Reach: 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Attach, death grip, *domination*
Special Qualities: *Invisibility*
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3
Abilities: Str 6, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 18
Skills: Climb +1, Hide +13 (+18 when attached), Move Silently +5, Search +4, Spot +3
Feats: Weapon Finesse
Environment: Any land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always lawful neutral
Advancement: 3–6 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —

My agents have sent me the preserved corpse of Quarrad, a steward of the Trine of Ountsy who attempted to slay his mistress. Needless to say, I was delighted by the opportunity to study the novel insectoid creature that I discovered still clinging to his shoulder. It appears to induce a pleasing subservience in those it infests. Experiments are afoot to find the precise parts of the human brain that the beast acts on, so that I might replicate them. I have tried repeatedly to scry Hesuel Ilshar to find the breeding ground of these parasites, but to no avail. Unfortunate, as I believe in addition to their magical properties, these creatures would make a rather tasty delicacy!

The overseer is an insectoid parasite that enforces the will of the Scarlet Sign upon those it infests.

The ever-industrious priests of Bralm created the overseers using a fell ritual to shape sacred ants to their insidious ends. Through the will of the Toiling Lady, these creatures become horrors used to dominate and control the weak-minded. Often, if an ally or dupe of the Scarlet Sign shows any sign of discontent or excessive self-will, the red brothers attempt to implant one of these fell creatures onto the unwitting victim.

The overseer resembles a red-hued ant, with a pair of elongated biting pincers and six often-writhing feelers. Its sole purpose is to latch onto the body of its intended victim with its pincers. Once the overseer bites its victim, it can exert a *domination* effect through its feelers. The overseer's ability to become invisible at will when attached to a victim is its chief defense mechanism. Its last line of defense is the death grip of the feelers. Removing the overseer from a *dominated* victim may in fact kill the unfortunate host.

Overseers speak Common and Ancient Suloise.

Combat

These vicious creatures are usually concealed within the robes of their scarlet masters. They are most effective against unarmored and sleeping victims, but have a remarkable affinity for hiding and striking from ambush. Generally, an attached overseer prefers to remain invisible, but if this is not possible it attempts to hide on its victim's body or in its clothing, never losing contact with its victim. If forced into melee, overseers tend to flee, having little offensive capability when surprise is not on their side.

Attach (Ex): If an overseer hits a victim with its biting pincers, it automatialy attaches itself to the victim's body. An attached overseer loses its Dexterity bonus to its Armor Class and is considered flat-footed.

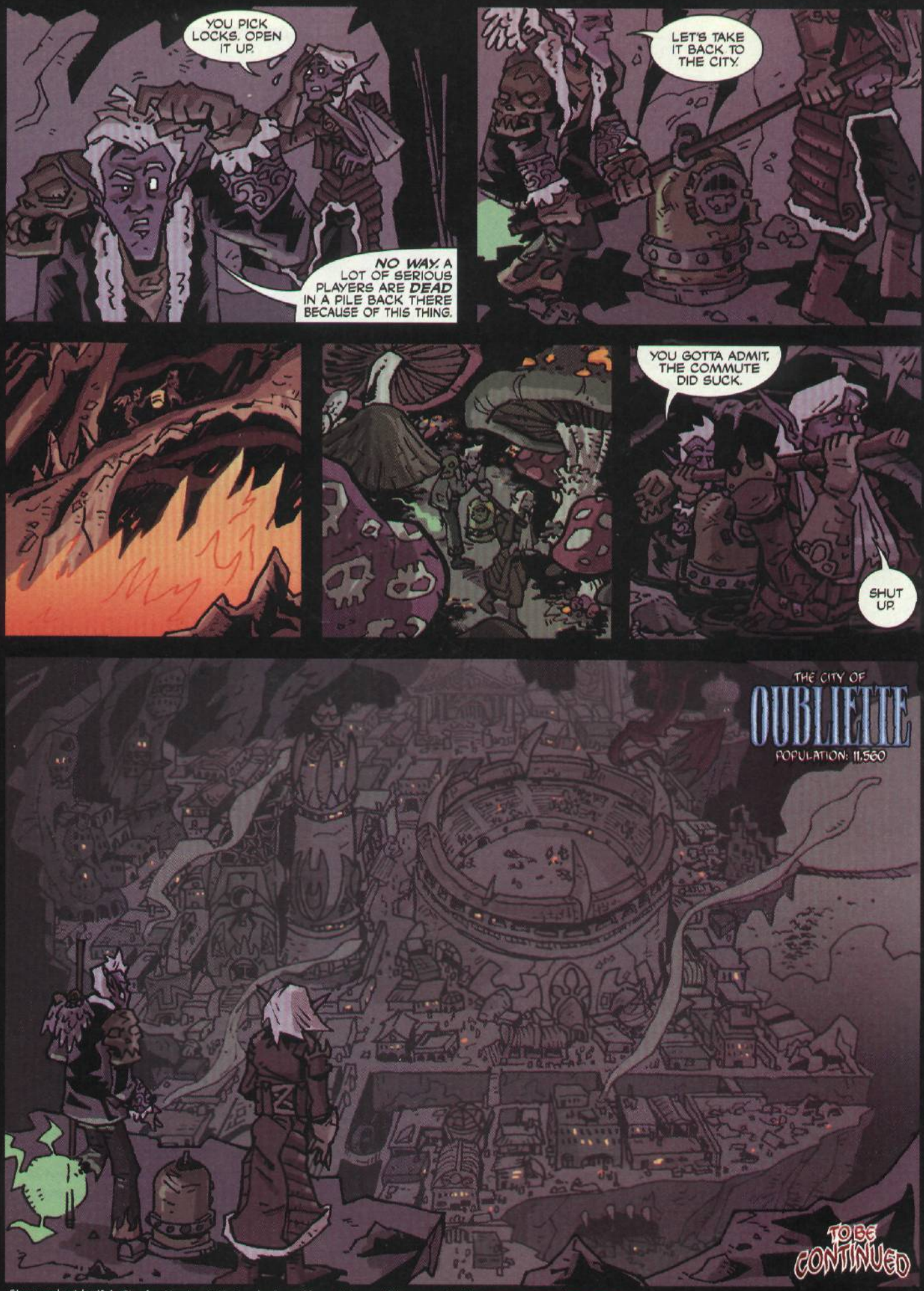
Death Grip (Su): After it has successfully attached itself to a victim, killing or removing the overseer can also slay the host. If the overseer is killed or removed, it inflicts on its host 1d6 points of damage per hour it has been attached (minimum of 1d6 and maximum of 10d6). This damage is raw magical damage and not subject to damage reduction or energy resistance. A successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 11) halves the damage done. This save DC is Constitution-based.

***Domination* (Su)**: An attached overseer may attempt to *dominate* its victim using its feelers. The victim must make a Will save (DC 15), or be *dominated* as per the *dominate monster* spell. The link between host and overseer is telepathic. This save DC is Charisma-based.

***Invisibility* (Su)**: The overseer, when attached to a host, can become invisible, as per the spell *invisibility*, as a free action. Every time the overseer issues an order to a *dominated* host, the overseer must make a Will save (DC 10) to avoid becoming visible.

Skills: Overseers gain a +5 circumstance bonus to Hide checks while attached to a host. ●

"DOWNER CAN'T BE TRUSTED. HE'S A LOOSE CANNON." THANKS A LOT, YOU ASS.
YOU'RE LUCKY I PUT YOUR STUMP IN STASIS. REMEMBER, THAT'S $50.
WELL, THE UNDERDARK IS A DANGEROUS PLACE. BEST WE STICK TOGETHER.
BUT IF YOU WEREN'T MY BROTHER, ARISTIDE, I *SWEAR* I WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU YEARS AGO.
FLAP FLAP FLAP
WHA!? BACK TO FINISH ME OFF, WENCH?
plink
THUP
I GOTS THE--
THUP
ULOLOK
THUP
BOYS!
AAIII! THAT IMP WAS MY *FAMILIAR!*
MMM, I RECKON SO. TELL YOU WHAT. I OWE YOU $75.
SO THAT'S WHAT THOSE BOUNTY HUNTERS WERE AFTER. WEIRD.
I GUESS THE LITTLE SNOT MADE GOOD.


YOU PICK LOCKS. OPEN IT UP.
NO WAY. A LOT OF SERIOUS PLAYERS ARE DEAD IN A PILE BACK THERE BECAUSE OF THIS THING.
LET'S TAKE IT BACK TO THE CITY.
YOU GOTTA ADMIT, THE COMMUTE DID SUCK.
SHUT UP.
THE CITY OF
OUBLIETTE
POPULATION: 11,560
TO BE CONTINUED

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

STAR WARS®

ROLEPLAYING GAME

Ord Vaxal:
Prison Planet of the Empire

By Gary Astleford
Illustrations by James Ryman and Tommy Lee Edwards
Cartography by Jeff Carlisle and Kyle Hunter

Sitting quietly on the periphery of the Inner Rim, Ord Vaxal is a dumping ground for the living garbage that litters the Empire. Those unlucky enough to find themselves confined to this mysterious penal colony are seldom heard from again. In the days of the Old Republic, Ord Vaxal was home to several correctional facilities, ranging from psychiatric institutions to maximum security lock-downs. A planet-wide jailbreak twenty years prior to the Rebellion Era led to worldwide anarchy, and has given the prisoners an unusual degree of illusory freedom that is restricted only by Ord Vaxal's azure skies.

Approaching Ord Vaxal

Ord Vaxal possesses several great oceans, which surround three large continents and several remote island chains. The continents are covered in alternating rain forests and plains, and while the polar regions consist of cold tundra, the rest of the planet is temperate year-round. Due to a mild axial tilt, Ord Vaxal's seasons are not intense, and seasonal changes are not dramatic. The planet's deep blue skies stretch over aquamarine plains and forests.

Aside from fresh water and several varieties of native hardwood, Ord Vaxal lacks much in the way of natural resources. Tin, lead, and copper can be found in limited quantities, but the planet lacks most other ores. Herds of wild nerfs, rontos, eopies, and small jungle banthas (similar to those from Kashyyyk) roam the grassy plains, having been imported by the Republic for their meat, milk, and skins. Ord Vaxal is also home to several indigenous creatures, including small amphibians called risps and menacing reptiles known as trighas.

Risps

Domesticated long ago by Republic colonists, risps are amphibious, dog-like scavengers that are sometimes trained for use as guard animals. About the size of greyhounds, they have yellow-green skin, wide mouths encrusted with serrated teeth, and six strong limbs that end in webbed feet tipped with jagged claws. In the wild, they hunt singly or in small family units. When alarmed or attacking, risps emit gurgling hisses and shrieks.

Risp: Jungle Scavenger 2; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 13 (+2 Dex, +1 size); Spd 14 m; VP/WP 1/6; Atk +0 melee (1d4–1, bite), or +0 melee (1d2–1 claws), or +3 ranged; SQ Breathe Underwater, Darkvision 30', Run-By Attack, Scent; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; SZ S (1 meter long); Face/Reach 2 m by 2 m/2 m; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 6, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 2. Challenge Code A.

Skills: Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3, Survival +3, Swim +5.

Feats: None.

Trighas

Trighas are a species of large predatory reptiles that hunt the jungles of Ord Vaxal. They have green, scaly hides, mottled with dark stripes and spots. Hunting in family units, they bellow as they crash through the underbrush, seeking to flush out prey. When a potential meal is seen, a trigha lets loose with

a high-pitched shriek, alerting its pack. Trighas chase prey single-mindedly and with little regard to their own safety.

Trigha: Jungle Predator 5; Init +0; Defense 14 (–2 size, +6 natural); Spd 14 m; VP/WP 32/44; Atk +10 melee (2d8+7, bite), or +3 ranged; SQ Low-light Vision, +4 species bonus to Survival (jungle) skill checks; SV Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +2; SZ H (6 meters long); Face/Reach 4 m by 10 m/4 m; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8. Challenge Code C.

Skills: Intimidate +2, Jump +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Survival +5, Spot +4.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Track.

A Prison Without Bars

The Old Republic settled Ord Vaxal for use as a penal colony. Prisons of all types dotted the surface of the planet, staffed by specialists and numerous prison guards. Planetary policy allowed the correctional staff to bring their families with them, and small colonial settlements sprang up around individual facilities in support of the civilian population. At the colony's height, the ratio of prisoners to correctional employees, civilians, and their families was nearly ten to one.

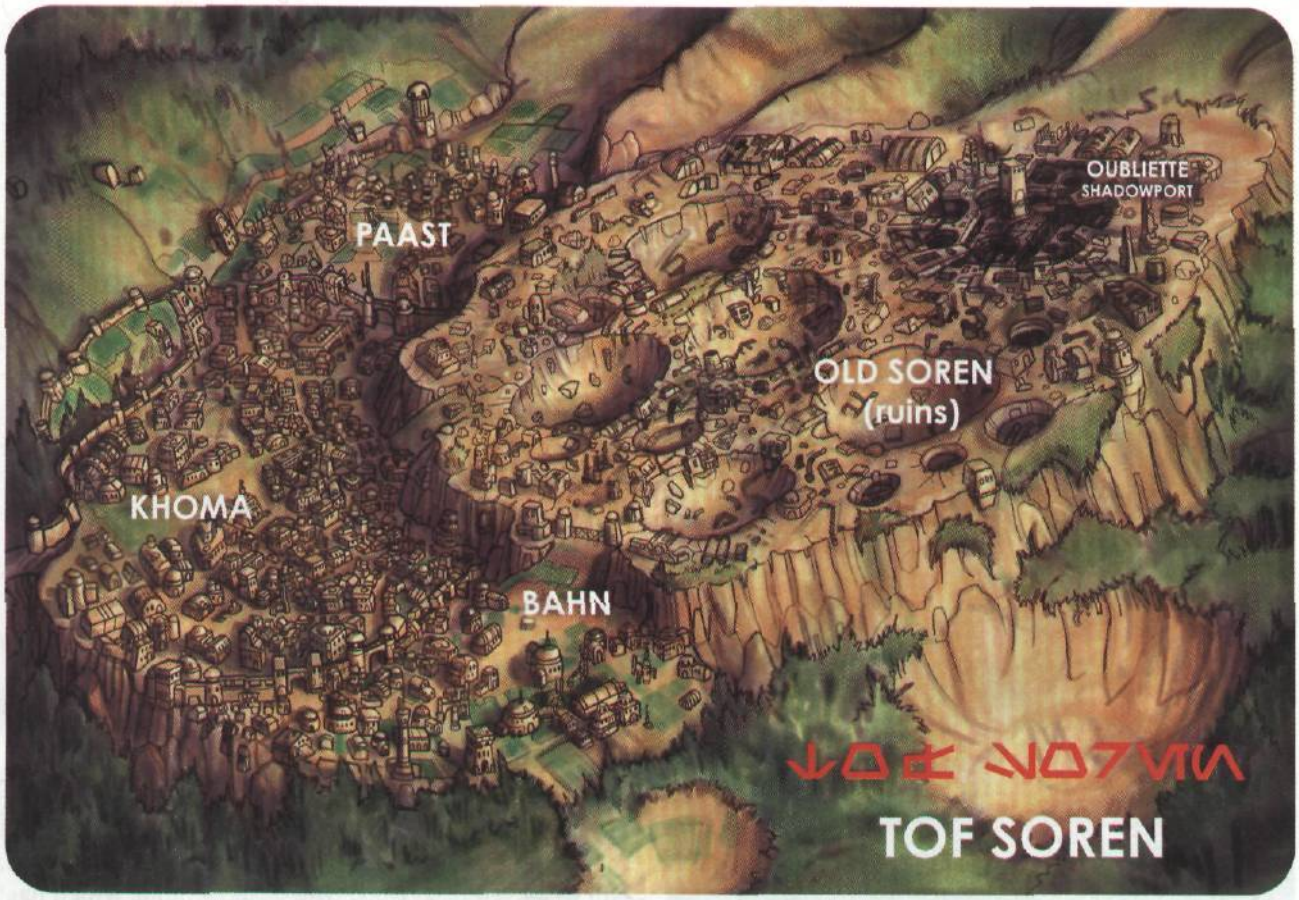
Anyone could see the high potential for disaster, even though previous disturbances amongst the prisoners had always been easily quelled. Possibility became reality when a chain gang from a medium-security facility overpowered their guards. News of the resistance spread quickly amongst both convicts and guards alike, spurring further mutinies in other prisons on a planet-wide basis. Between the complacency of the authorities and the increasing organization of the prisoners, things quickly spiraled out of control.

After two weeks of continued rebellion, armies of angry convicts advanced on the planet's largest starports, intending to leave Ord Vaxal at all costs. Republic naval forces arrived to suppress the uprising, but were hindered by the bureaucracy and red tape so common in the Old Republic. The prisoners were deeply entrenched by the time an effective blockade could be established around the planet, and Republic officials feared that sending in ground troops would only escalate the violence. In order to prevent prisoners from leaving the system, the orbiting Republic fleet heavily bombarded Ord Vaxal's starports. While a few convicts managed to escape in the ensuing chaos, most remained stranded on the planet's surface.

Several years of anarchy followed. Bands of escaped prisoners turned upon each other when it became apparent that their new-found freedom was limited to the surface of the planet. Roving groups of brigands, led by petty warlords, set up small kingdoms, ruling their fiefs from the very prison facilities that they had escaped years earlier. Despite the anarchy, a tenuous peace eventually settled over the colony.

The Republic navy kept a wary eye on the events transpiring on the planet below. In the years following what was commonly known as the "Jailbreak," Republic pickets remained in orbit on a rotating basis. Not only was this security intended to prevent prisoners from escaping, it was also necessary to keep other ne'er-do-wells from landing on the planet.

When Palpatine came to power, he doubled the strength of the orbital garrison and decreed that Ord Vaxal would henceforth be used as a depository for rebels, political dis-



sidents, and other criminals. In the Rebellion era, Imperial prison ships continuously arrive at Ord Vaxal. The ships' prisoners are ferried to the planet's surface and left to fend for themselves. The severity of a convict's crime has no bearing on the matter, and once marooned on the planet's surface, there can be no reprieve or parole.

Tof Soren

The shantytown of Tof Soren was established two years after the Jailbreak by a loose confederation of escaped prisoners and civilian workers who had been abandoned on Ord Vaxal. In the years since the Jailbreak, it has grown into the largest single settlement in the region, capable of limited industry and supporting some five thousand residents. Chief among Tof Soren's exports to neighboring communities are dyed cloth woven from the fur of local nerfs, cultivated grains, and slugthrowers. In fact, most of the firearms in use on Ord Vaxal were created by artisans living in Tof Soren.

Built on the outskirts of Soren, an old penal spaceport that was blasted to rubble by the Republic fleet after the Jailbreak, Tof Soren is comprised of a combination of makeshift shanties (constructed from scavenged building materials) and newer structures made from orange brick and blue-gray stone. Although backward by galactic standards, the people of Tof Soren live relatively well considering the state of anarchy on their planet.

Local law is enforced on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, and several different law enforcement agencies (which are more akin to rival gangs than to police departments) hold sway in different areas of the city. There is no central government, though gang representatives meet occasionally to discuss important issues. The different gangs refuse to cooperate under most circumstances, but will band together to repel larger threats to the town as a whole.

Each of the town's three neighborhoods, Khorma, Bahn, and Paast, feature their own residential, market, and business districts. Khorma is by far the largest of the three, spanning well into the outskirts of Old Soren (as the spaceport ruins are known to locals). Bahn and Paast are nearly as large together as Khorma is by itself, and they control the majority of the town's food resources. Fighting between the three neighborhoods was rampant four years ago, but an unsteady peace has since been established.

Much of the city's transportation is based on nerf-drawn wagons, smaller "jungle" banthas, and rontos. Rontos have adapted well to Ord Vaxal's climate; several known herds of the beasts roam wild in the outlying countryside.

The Khorma Weapon Market

Ord Vaxal's most famous weapon emporium is nestled amid the farmer's markets and clothing stalls of Khorma. Most of the slugthrowers traded here are manufactured locally. The guns lack a standard caliber, with each gunsmith choosing his own in order to create a captive market for ammunition (which is often more expensive than the slugthrowers themselves). A limited supply of blaster

Ord Vaxal

Planet Type: Terrestrial
Climate: Warm to arctic
Terrain: Rainforests, oceans, grassy plains
Atmosphere: Breathable
Gravity: Standard
Diameter: 11,254 km
Length of Day: 25 standard hours
Length of Year: 288 standard days
Sentient Species: Human, many alien species (inmates)
Languages: Basic
Population: 180,000+ inmates estimated worldwide
Species Mix: 64% Human, 36% other
Government: Anarchy/Feudal
Major Exports: None
Major Imports: Criminals
System/Star: Vaxal

Planets	Type	Moons
Thira	Searing Rock	1
Caprol	Barren Rock	0
Irfan	Gas Giant	7
Ord Vaxal	Terrestrial	1
Pheon	Barren Rock	2

weapons is also available, if the right questions are asked (requiring a DC 20 Gather Information check). Many of these blasters lack power sources or the means to recharge them, and most are over 20 years old. Without the technology to keep them in good repair, blaster weapons are viewed as nothing more than expensive artifacts by most inhabitants of Ord Vaxal.

Full-scale mining on Ord Vaxal is nearly unheard of. The planet has never been rich in ores of any kind, although tin, lead, and copper can be found in limited quantities. Areas and settlements with significant deposits of these metals are held in high esteem, if not envied outright, by local warlords. Control of such resources has sparked several bloody conflicts. Because of the rarity of ore on Ord Vaxal, metal scraps are highly-prized by everyone, and trade is often accomplished with salvaged metal objects. Brave and foolhardy scavengers often venture into the ruins of the Soren spaceport in search of metal scraps or a piece of pipe. Many never return, which lends credence to the myths that the ruins are haunted.

Weapons in Tof Soren

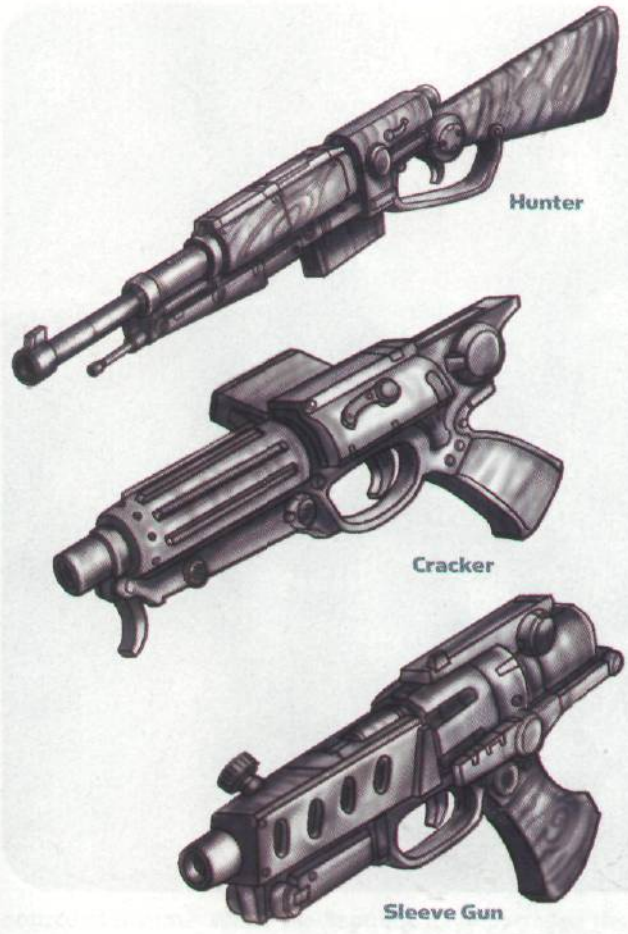
Slugthrowers have become a vital accessory in Tof Soren, and nearly every citizen carries at least one. They are seen as a form of jewelry, with those of higher station carrying ornately decorated weapons. The smiths of Tof Soren primarily produce three types of firearms: sleeve guns, crackers, and hunters. Although the terminology remains the same between weapons from different artisans, the appearance and ammunition used by different guns can vary wildly.

Sorenese firearms are constructed from as many natural resources as possible. This means that locally-available hardwoods are incorporated into designs, making them appear somewhat rustic by galactic standards. The larger the weapon, the more likely it is that a significant portion will be carved from wood. The Carver's Guild, which has become an important element in Tof Soren's politics, is solely responsible for regulating and producing grips, stocks, and other weapon-related materials. Those gun makers who do not belong to the Carver's Guild often employ at least one artisan who does.

Guns are identified by the name of their designers, with Fassa, Gules, Sachra, and Toddle being four of the largest gunsmiths in Tof Soren. Gunsmiths create the metallic components of the weapons, such as the barrels, locks, receivers, and trigger assemblies, from bits of scrap metal found in the ruins of the Soren spaceport. They smelt down locally-collected copper and zinc, using it to make brass for bullet casings. The gunsmiths also manufacture lead projectiles and gunpowder. In the long term, bullets are the most expensive component, and manufacturers recognize that guns are little better than clubs without them.

Listed costs reflect the values of such weapons to the galactic community at large. In Tof Soren, prices are variable, based on barter, and must be negotiated through haggling. Goods and services are routinely traded for functional slugthrowers and ammunition. If these weapons were somehow exported off-world, compatible ammunition could be easily and cheaply fabricated.

Tof Soren Hideout Pistol ("Sleeve Gun")
Weapon Type: Slugthrower Pistol
Proficiency Group: Slugthrowers **Cost:** 100
Damage: 2d4–1 **Critical:** 20



Range Increment: 2 m **Weight:** .5 kilograms
Fort DC: — **Type:** Piercing
Multifire/Autofire: — **Size:** Tiny
Hardness: 4 **WP:** 2 **Break DC:** 12
Availability: Rare, Licensed **Era:** RotE
Special: This weapon fires 2 shots before it must be reloaded. It uses a 2-shot internal magazine, which takes 1 round to reload. The bullets are inserted individually. Referred to as "sleeve guns" by the population of Tof Soren, the typical hideout pistol uses an 8mm-diameter bullet (though this varies by manufacturer).

Tof Soren Slugthrower Pistol ("Cracker")
Weapon Type: Slugthrower Pistol
Proficiency Group: Slugthrowers **Cost:** 200
Damage: 2d6+1 **Critical:** 20
Range Increment: 10 m **Weight:** 1.6 kilograms
Fort DC: — **Type:** Piercing
Multifire/Autofire: M **Size:** Small
Hardness: 5 **WP:** 2 **Break DC:** 15
Availability: Rare, Licensed **Era:** RotE
Special: This weapon fires 7 shots before it must be reloaded. It uses a 7-shot internal magazine, which takes 4 rounds to reload. Called "crackers" due to their distinctive rapport, the typical pistol in Tof Soren has a top-loading internal magazine that must be reloaded one bullet at a time. The average bullet diameter is somewhere between 10mm and 11mm.

Tof Soren Hunting Rifle ("Hunter")
Weapon Type: Slugthrower Rifle
Proficiency Group: Slugthrowers **Cost:** 300
Damage: 2d8+2 **Critical:** 20
Range Increment: 30 m **Weight:** 4.2 kilograms
Fort DC: — **Type:** Piercing
Multifire/Autofire: — **Size:** Medium
Hardness: 5 **WP:** 5 **Break DC:** 18
Availability: Rare, Licensed **Era:** RotE
Special: This weapon fires 5 shots before it must be reloaded. It uses a 5-shot internal magazine that takes 3 rounds to reload. Like the typical cracker, the hunting rifle (or "hunter") uses a top-loaded internal magazine. Equipped only with iron sights, hunters can be modified with simple telescopic sights that span the length of the weapon's barrel (add 100 credits to the weapon's base cost). This scope negates range penalties for the first two range increments, though this does not extend the weapon's maximum range. The weapon uses a bullet of approximately 6mm in diameter, with a large powder charge behind it.

The People of Tof Soren

With more than 5,000 residents, Tof Soren is one of the largest single settlements on the face of Ord Vaxal. Local fashion includes homespun robes, trousers, and colorfully-embroidered vests and shirts, with buttons made from carved wood or polished bone. Diverse alien species inhabit the city, although the majority of the residents are human. No one purpose unites the citizens of Tof Soren, unless it is the fact that they are all serving life sentences with no possibility of redemption.

By necessity, Tof Soren is a tough town. While "peacekeepers" maintain an uneasy peace within their individual neighborhoods during the light of day, the nights are lawless and best spent indoors.

Tandy, Transport Specialist

Tandy was a civilian transport operator prior to the Jail Break. He's much older now, balding and gray, but there's still a certain "spark" about him. He figures he'll probably end up dying on Ord Vaxal, but he intends to have fun doing it. His prized possession is his repulsortruck, which he's kept in good working order since the Jail Break.

Tandy is a human in his late fifties who dresses in stained overalls and has a balding head. What little hair he has is gray, long, and tied back in a loose, scraggly pony tail that hangs to his mid-back. A floppy, broad-brimmed cap shields his hazel eyes from Ord Vaxal's sun. He wears a cracker in a brown leather gunbelt around his waist, but doesn't like to use it unless he has no other choice.

Tandy: Male Human Fringer 4; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 16 (+2 Dex, +4 class); Spd 10; VP/WP 30/15; Atk +3 melee (1d3, fist), or +5 ranged (2d6+1, slugthrower pistol); SQ Bonus class skills (Repair, Treat Injury), barter, jury-rig +2; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2; SZ M; FP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Repulsortruck, "cracker" slugthrower pistol, old greasy overalls, floppy-brimmed cap.

Skills: Climb +1, Gamble +3, Hide +4, Jump +1, Knowledge (Ord Vaxal) +3, Listen +3, Pilot +11, Profession (mechanic) +5, Profession (repulsortruck driver) +5, Read/Write Basic, Repair +5, Search +1, Speak Basic, Spot +3, Survival +7, Treat Injury +3.

Feats: Dodge, Rugged, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Weapon Group Proficiencies (primitive weapons, simple weapons, slugthrowers).

Tandy's Repulsortruck

The antiquated repulsortruck that has become Tandy's hallmark is a miracle of Ubrikkian engineering. Much of the metal and alloy siding has been completely stripped from the vehicle, leaving a skeleton-like chassis paneled with slats of wood and tightly-woven rattan. The large cab seats two, in addition to Tandy, and four more passengers can ride in the truck's bed (at their own risk, of course). Tandy uses his repulsortruck to earn a living, transporting cargo and passengers to their destinations.

Ubrikkian ST-101 Repulsortruck

Class: Speeder (Ground)
Size: Large (5 meters long)
Passengers: 6
Cargo Capacity: 1,000 kg
Speed: 75 m
Max Velocity: 220 km/h
Cost: 12,500 (new), 3,000 (used)
Crew: 1 (unique)
Initiative: +10 (–1 size, +11 crew)
Maneuver: +10 (–1 size, +11 crew)
Defense: 15* (–1 size, +6 armor)
Shield Points: 0
Hull Points: 33 (DR 5)

**Provides full cover to crew, and half cover to passengers.*

Peacekeepers

The neighborhood syndicates keep their streets safe by employing peacekeepers (referred to as "enforcers" by locals). The peacekeepers patrol in groups of three, are armed with crackers, and wear armor composed of light alloys, boiled leather, and scavenged materials. There are no established uniforms, but each peacekeeper is given a badge of rank that identifies his allegiance.

Khorma peacekeepers are better equipped than those of the other neighborhoods, and pin a small black disk to their chests. The enforcers from Bahn carry heavy clubs and cudgels in addition to their crackers, and are identified by purple diamond-shaped tattoos below their eyes. Paast is possibly the toughest of Tof Soren's neighborhoods, and the peacekeepers there take no prisoners. Paast peacekeepers are distinguished by tightly-braided red cords worn around the neck.

Tof Soren's peacekeepers, regardless of their neighborhoods, use the statistics for low-level thugs (see the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* Revised Core Rulebook, page 355), but replace Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols) with Weapon Group Proficiency (slugthrowers).

The Oubliette Shadowport

In the time between the Jailbreak and Palpatine's rise to power, the Hutts took notice of Ord Vaxal's potential as a

source of income. While the Republic navy patrolled the space above the planet, it did so sporadically and without much vigor. This allowed the Hutts to send in scouts to verify that Ord Vaxal was a veritable treasure trove brimming with the forgotten and unwanted members of galactic society. In other words, it was a rich source of slaves.

Hutt representatives were quick to establish a small stronghold within the still-smoldering ruins of the Soren starport. Their movements were careful and deliberate, so as not to attract the attention of either the Republic navy or the prisoners on the planet's surface. Considering that the ruin of the bombed-out spaceport was several kilometers across, keeping the shadowport hidden from Ord Vaxal's population was easier than it might at first appear. Keeping the comings and goings of the Hutts' transports from the Republic picket vessels was another matter entirely.

Oubliette, as the shadowport came to be called, sits on the northern rim of Old Soren. Several of the original docking bays have been excavated, allowing accommodations for several small or medium freighters. In the years prior to the Emperor's New Order, the Hutts wasted no time in renovating a small portion of the old starport. The majority of the facility is subterranean, and the few portions that remain exposed to the surface are cleverly designed to blend in with the surrounding ruin. Taking advantage of local superstitions in order to maintain secrecy, transports take off and land only at night. Most locals believe that the starport ruins are haunted and tainted with dangerous amounts of residual radiation.

Oubliette boasts all the comforts of home. Cantinas, brothels, and brokers of all sorts have their places within the shadowport's community, and their employees work hard to separate the pirates, smugglers, and slavers who frequent the place from their credits. A portion of the facility is dedicated to what the Hutts refer to as "cargo processing," where slaves are scanned, cleaned up, and appraised. Those with special skills are singled out and tagged. Regardless of a slave's final destination, all receive a restraint implant before being prepared for loading onto the next available transport to Hutt space, where they are invariably forced into some form of backbreaking labor.

The Hutts' agents collect slaves via several different means. Press gangs kidnap explorers as they comb the starport ruins for valuable scrap. Some slavers leave particularly valuable pieces of salvage exposed within the ruined starport as bait. A more insidious method of capturing slaves involves sending out press gangs disguised as natives. The gangs disperse into groups of two or three, and comb the area in search of potential targets. Victims are lured away from their homes by promises of a life far away from Ord Vaxal.

Slaves aren't the only commodities to come out of Oubliette. The compound's underground marketplaces see the trade of all manner of black market goods. Weapons, spice, stolen goods, dangerous or endangered creatures, and illegal cybernetics are all available. In fact, Oubliette features a laboratory responsible for the development of new cybernetic devices, such as the Huttese restraint

implant (see below). Captured slaves who are not fit for export are used as guinea pigs in horrible experiments in order to test newly-developed cybernetic systems. The Hutts also use the shadowport to hide away "hot" items and individuals, sometimes for months or years at a time. Ord Vaxal is like a secret Huttese lock-box, protected by the finest Imperial security that truguts can buy.

Huttese Restraint Implants ("Bio Bolts")

Based on the restraining bolts so often used on droids, restraint implants represent a new Huttese approach to controlling organic slaves and prisoners. Installed at the base of a slave's skull. This small cybernetic device taps directly into the portions of the brain that control pleasure, pain, and motor control. It is typically installed with a "tagger," a device that resembles a large pistol.

With the use of a hand-held wand, or "slave caller," a slave can be punished, rewarded, or struck immobile at his master's whim. Most hand-held slave callers have a range limited only by line of sight, but there are larger models that can transmit signals to individual implants up to 1,000 kilometers away. The slave caller is a slim remote, studded with buttons. Some are designed with aesthetics in mind, resembling the scepters of kings, while others resemble walking sticks or canes.

When activated, the slave caller can be used to punish or reward slaves. There are three punishment settings available. The lowest of these causes slight discomfort, while the highest can kill if left active for too long (see Table 1–1). When activated, the slave must succeed at a Fortitude save, or be incapacitated by the pain for 1d4+1 rounds. Regardless of whether the save is successful, the slave suffers the listed damage.

Table 1–1: Restraint Implant Punishment Settings

Punishment Setting	Fort Save DC	Damage
Low	10	None
Medium	15	1d2 Vitality
High	20	1d6 Vitality

Slave callers also can be used to reward slaves by stimulating the pleasure centers of their brains. Such a use gives the slave a brief feeling of pleasure and well-being. A slave who is rewarded on a regular basis can become addicted to such positive reinforcement. Many will do anything for their masters if they can expect to be rewarded in this manner.

The third function of a slave caller can paralyze a slave, rendering him unable to move or speak. Although this setting will not harm the target directly, the feeling of helplessness caused by this paralysis can be just as bad as the pain of being punished. A paralyzed slave can attempt a Will save (DC 25) in order to move or speak, and a successful save must be made each round in which the slave wishes to take an action. Paralyzed slaves are considered to be helpless targets.

Slaves can attempt to remove their bio bolts. An implant must be either surgically removed, or pried forcefully from the slave. If surgically removed, the operation inflicts 1d4 points of wound damage. If pried free, the damage is increased to 1d8 wound points. A successful Treat Injury skill check (DC 15) reduces this damage by half. Tampering with the implant causes it to emit an agonizing pulse that incapacitates the slave unless a successful Fortitude save (DC 20) is made. If the Fortitude save is unsuccessful, this pulse knocks the slave unconscious for 1d4+1 rounds.

Install DC: 5

Common Side Effects: Pain Sensitivity. If improperly installed, a restraint implant can make even minor discomfort feel like intense agony. If injured, a character affected by this side effect must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 5 plus the amount of damage suffered) or be stunned for one round.

DR/Wounds: 0/4

Price: 25 credits

The Imperial Presence Grows

When Emperor Palpatine rose to power, the blockade in orbit around Ord Vaxal increased in strength. Corvettes and older dreadnaughts were routed to the Vaxal system to perform picket duty. The increased military presence, coupled with dozens of spy satellites and two Golan defense platforms, created a dense sensor net over the planetary surface. If so much as a mynock attempted to breech Ord Vaxal's atmosphere, the Empire would know about it. This expanded level of security brought the Huttese operations in the Oubliette shadowport to a halt.

Each day marked more lost revenue, which spurred the normally patient Hutts to react quickly. Hutt operatives contacted Adria Reyn, the sector moff, and made her a deal she couldn't refuse. Whether this consisted of bribes, blackmail, or both, no one can say. Within hours, the sensor net around Ord Vaxal had been slightly rearranged. This reorganization of the planet's security allowed for a very narrow access corridor leading directly to the Oubliette shadowport.

Over the past few years, the Huttese efforts to undermine the Imperial blockade have remained successful. Moff Reyn has expanded upon her position of authority within the sector, while simultaneously providing a shining example of Imperial duplicity and corruption. So long as she sticks to her part of the bargain, the Hutts are content to rake in the truguts as scheduled transports brimming with slaves make the short trip from the Vaxal System into Hutt Space.

Threading the Needle

Making the journey to Oubliette requires very careful system navigation at predetermined speeds. A low profile must be maintained by reducing a ship's power expenditure below operational limits, with precise course changes being made at very specific intervals. Even slight deviation from this course results in potential detection by Imperial pickets, with disastrous results. The Hutts are

reluctant to give this course information to smugglers or slavers that have not yet proven themselves. Because of this, the existence of the Oubliette shadowport remains one of their best-kept secrets.

Careful scrutiny of the Imperial sensor net can reveal that there are gaps and imperfections in Ord Vaxal's planetary defenses. Analyzing this information requires a Knowledge (technology) skill check (DC 30). If the analyst has specific knowledge of Imperial security protocols within the system, access to schedules, or other related information, he receives a +5 circumstance bonus on this skill roll. Even with this information, "threading the needle" from the edge of the Vaxal system to the docking bays of Oubliette requires a Pilot skill check (DC 30). Pilots who possess the specific course information provided by the Hutts gain a +10 competence bonus on this roll.

The Powers Behind Oubliette

Oubliette was the brainchild of Sassallo, a Hutt of the Besadii clan. She had always had her stubby fingers deep within the Huttese slave trade, and she saw Ord Vaxal as an opportunity to further increase her personal prestige and power within her clan. Sassallo has proven to be shrewd in her business, and while not a staggering success by any means, she has garnered quite a reputation. If Sassallo has one weakness, it is games of chance. She rarely loses a wager, and can rarely resist to indulge in one if the opportunity presents itself. The stake of the bet doesn't matter to her so much as the game itself, and she isn't above cheating if her opponent isn't a Hutt.

Sassallo is a bloated Hutt who wears an excessive amount of very gaudy jewelry. Gem-encrusted rings adorn her fingers, necklaces with thick platinum links encircle her massive neck, and golden hoops hang from her nostrils and lips. She is never without her slave caller, a 30-centimeter-long scepter carved from flawless ivory and studded with emeralds. Sassallo's large retinue includes dozens of slaves, guards, and other assorted servants and yes-men.

Sassallo the Hutt: Female Hutt Noble 4/Scoundrel 5/Crime Lord 3; Init +3 (–1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 15 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +9 class, –2 multiclass penalty); Spd 2; VP/WP 54/12; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4+2, unarmed), or +5/+0 ranged; SQ Species traits, bonus class skill (intimidate), favor +2, inspire confidence, resource access, coordinate +1, illicit barter, lucky (1/day), precise attack +1, contact, inspire fear –2; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +12; SZ L; FP 0; DSP 6; Rep +8; Str 14, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Equipment: Repulsorlift dais, gaudy jewelry, slave caller.

Skills: Appraise +14, Bluff +16, Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +7, Forgery +11, Gamble +19, Gather Information +11, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +10, Knowledge (Ord Vaxal) +12, Knowledge (slavery) +20, Knowledge (streetwise) +14, Listen +8, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Huttese, Sense Motive +13, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Ryl, Spot +8.

Feats: Headstrong, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Infamy, Persuasive, Skill Emphasis (Gamble, Knowledge [slav-

ery]), Trick, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

While Sassallo the Hutt is the undisputed ruler of Oubliette, Moff Adria Reyn is the master of the Callia sector as a whole. A political appointee with little practical military experience, Moff Reyn has always been a consummate politician. Over the years, she has managed to maneuver herself into the most favorable circumstances possible. No method has ever been too underhanded for her: bribery, extortion, slander, and murder have all served Adria quite well. Until she was confronted by Sassallo's cronies, Moff Reyn had never known the bitter taste of her own corrupt medicine.

Even though she had always been discreet in her underhanded dealings, Adria often utilized second parties to execute the shadier tasks for her. Although this kept her hands physically clean, it always ensured that there was someone out there who knew too much. Some of these operators were also employees of the Hutts, and they kept careful records of their transactions with the Moff. This information gave Sassallo a certain degree of leverage when she finally decided to negotiate with Moff Reyn for control of the Oubliette shadowport. Being blackmailed by the Hutts is a blow to her ego, but Adria is well-paid for her role in keeping the route to Oubliette open.

Adria Reyn is a middle-aged woman with graying brown hair, an athletic frame, and a cruel hazel eyes. She wears the uniform and trappings of her station well, cutting an impressive figure while maintaining her femininity. Adria accepts nothing less than perfection from her subordinates, and those who fail to please her often find themselves put to use in less important but distinctly more dangerous roles. Living only for the prestige and power of her position, Moff Reyn is nonetheless put off-balance by her reluctant relationship with the slug-like Sassallo. Given the opportunity, she would sever her ties to the crime lord in an instant.

Moff Adria Reyn: Female Human Noble 6/Soldier 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 16 (+1 Dex, +7 class, –2 multiclass penalty); Spd 10; VP/WP 48/14; Atk +5/+0 melee (1d4–1, unarmed), or +7/+2 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Bonus class skill (bluff), favor +2, inspire confidence, resource access, coordinate +1; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +8; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 2; Rep +5; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Equipment: Uniform, personal shuttle, blaster pistol.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +11, Computer Use +4, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +5, Knowledge (politics) +11, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Profession (sector Moff) +12, Search +2, Sense Motive +13, Read/Write Huttese, Speak Huttese.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Influence, Political Pull, Skill Emphasis (Bluff, Knowledge [politics]), Sharp-Eyed, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Imperial Prison Ships and Transports

The workhorses of the Imperial blockade around Ord

Vaxal are the *Purgatory*-class prison ship and the *Peth*-class inmate transport shuttle. The *Purgatory*-class prison ship was originally designed as a troop conveyance during the Clone Wars, and dubbed the *Porter*-class transport. Due to the ship's cramped and uncomfortable accommodations, the soldiers it was designed to transport during its initial trials hated it. As newer designs were adopted by the Republic, existing *Porters* were converted into prison ships and renamed *Purgatories*.

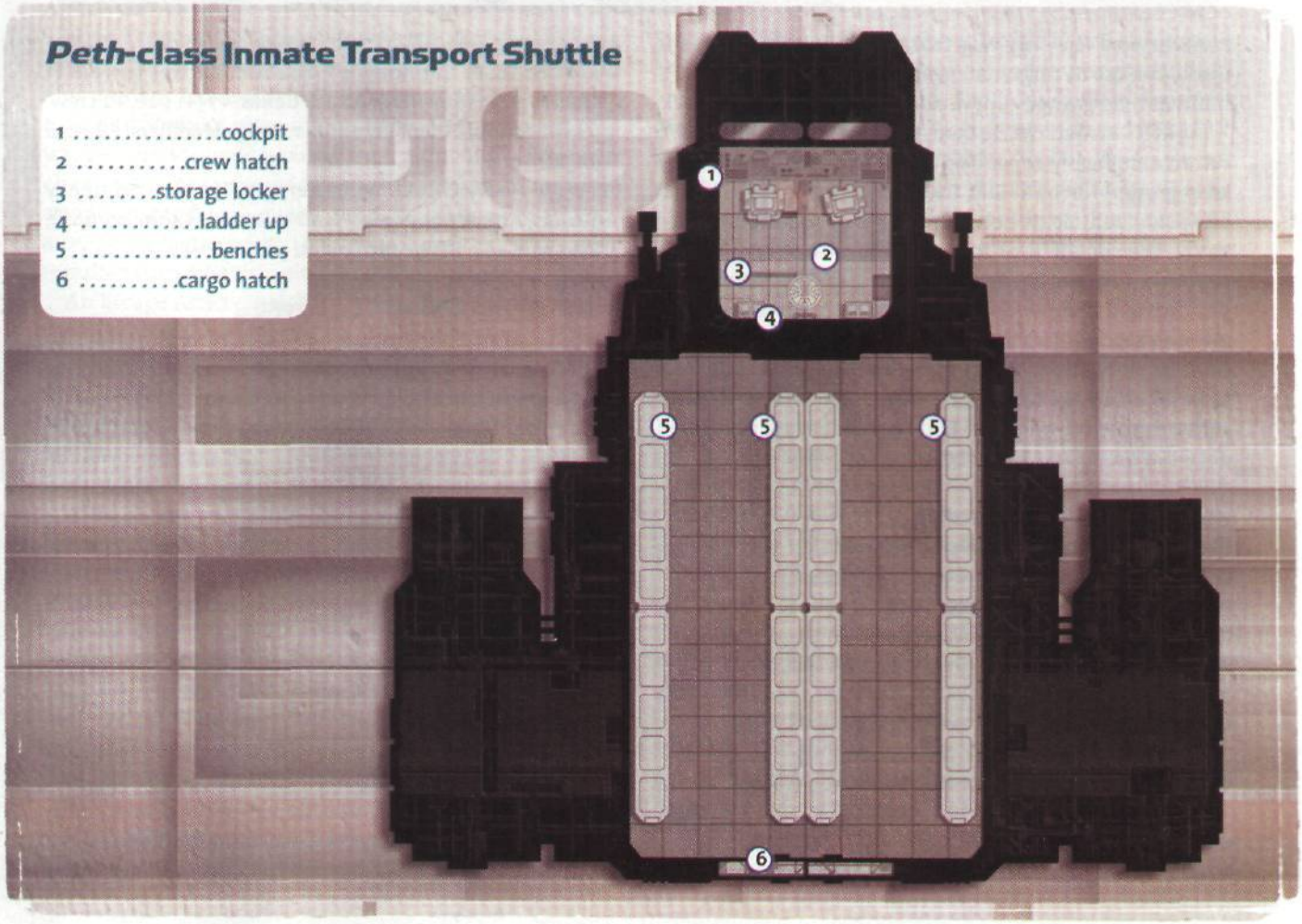
Aesthetic design has been sacrificed in the name of function insofar as the *Purgatory* is concerned. Over a kilometer in length, the design is blocky, box-like, and slow. Although armed with five turbolaser turrets and sixteen laser cannons, the ship performs poorly if pressed into combat. The *Purgatory* is also equipped with two landing bays, each housing three *Peth*-class transport shuttles and two TIE fighters.

There are eight prison blocks on board, with each block supporting 500 prisoners and 25 guards. Each block is further broken down into 50 cramped ten-prisoner cells, equipped with uncomfortable bunks and minimal refresher facilities. The only way out of a cell is a 2-meter-high, 1-meter-wide blast door, which is controlled from a security station elsewhere on the ship.

Rothana Heavy Engineering Purgatory-class Prison Ship

Class: Capital
Crew: 350 (Skilled +4)
Size: Colossal (1,060 meters)
Initiative: −4 (−8 size, +4 crew)
Hyperdrive: x2, x14 backup
Maneuver: −4 (−8 size, +4 crew)
Passengers: 200 (guards), 4,000 (prisoners)
Defense: 12 (−8 size, +10 armor)
Cargo Capacity: 15,000 tons
Shield Points: 200 (DR 60)
Consumables: 5 years
Hull Points: 460 (DR 60)
Cost: Not available for sale
Maximum Speed in Space: Cruising (2 squares/action)
Atmospheric Speed: Not applicable
Weapon: Turbolasers (5); **Fire Arc:** 2 front, 1 left, 1 right, 1 rear; **Attack Bonus:** −2 (−8 size, +2 crew, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 5d10x5; **Range Modifiers:** PB −4, S −2, M/L n/a.
Weapon: Laser Cannons (16); **Fire Arc:** 6 front, 3 left, 3 right, 4 rear; **Attack Bonus:** +0 (−8 size, +2 crew, +8 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB −4, S −2, M/L n/a.

The *Peth*-class Inmate Transport Shuttle is used to ferry inmates to the surface of Ord Vaxal. It is an oblong, bus-shaped transport, with a large, featureless cargo area. The ship's hold, which is intended to transport up to forty prisoners at a time, is equipped with simple benches and no safety restraints. These benches can be retracted into the floor, making the hold seem like the inside of a large



metallic box. The only way in or out of this cargo area is through a broad cargo hatch; access to the pilot compartment can be gained only through the cockpit's airlock.

Lightly armed with two laser cannons and two retractable heavy repeating blasters, which are used to keep ground forces at bay, the *Peth* is not designed as an offensive vehicle. When transporting prisoners to Ord Vaxal, the shuttle flies to a pre-determined spot on the planet's surface, hovers about 3–4 meters above the ground, and opens the rear cargo doors. Passengers are given 10 seconds to leave the ship before the pilots "stand it on its tail" and take off for orbit. Any prisoners who somehow manage to remain in the cargo area find themselves exposed to vacuum. The cargo doors are not closed until the transport returns to its mother ship.

Rothana Heavy Engineering Peth-class Inmate Transport Shuttle

Class: Space Transport
Size: Small (35 m long)
Hyperdrive: None
Passengers: 42 (2 guards, 40 prisoners)
Cargo Capacity: 20 tons (or passengers)
Consumables: 1 day (crew only)
Cost: 450,000 (new)
Crew: 4 (Skilled +4)
Initiative: (+1 size, +4 crew)
Maneuver: (+1 size, +4 crew)
Defense: 21 (+1 size, +10 armor)
Shield Points: 30 (DR 20)
Hull Points: 100 (DR 20)
Maximum Speed in Space: Attack (7 squares/action)
Atmospheric Speed: 850 km/h (14 squares/action)
Weapon: Laser Cannons (2); **Fire Arc:** Partial Turrets (1 front/right, 1 front/left); **Attack Bonus:** +7 (+1 size, +2 crew, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10×2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a.
Weapon: Heavy Repeating Blasters (2); **Fire Arc:** Underbelly Turrets; **Attack Bonus:** −2 (−8 size, +2 crew, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 4d8; **Range Increment:** 30 m.

Imperial Correctional Equipment

Specialized restraint equipment is required in order to control unruly or dangerous felons. Aboard Imperial prison ships, the PRC-316 restraint collar and the Cartel Secureworks Repulsorfield Generator are two examples of this type of device. Every prisoner, without exception, is fitted with a PRC-316, while only those convicts with a predilection for climbing or flight are equipped with a repulsorfield generator. Due to safety and security concerns, these devices are rarely removed prior to transferring prisoners between facilities (including Ord Vaxal).

Locris Syndicated Securities PRC-316 Prisoner Restraint Collar
Cost: 200
Availability: Rare
Weight: 1 kilogram
Era: All
Special: This item can be used with a special remote control (cost: 500, weight: 1 kg).

Used by Republic (and, later, Imperial) correctional officers, the PRC-316 is an inexpensive combination of slave collar and stun cuffs. Designed to keep even the most

unruly prisoners well-behaved, the PRC-316 is available in varying sizes. The collar consists of a reactive plasteel cable inside an insulating sheath that is worn around the neck and secured by a small magnalock. When activated, the collar delivers a stunning jolt. The wearer must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. The remote control can be keyed to activate either a specific collar individually, or a group of selected collars all at once.

In addition to the remote function, the collar has an anti-tampering mechanism. An Escape Artist check (DC 40) is required to slip free of the collar, and if the check fails by 5 or more points, the wearer takes 1d4 points of damage as the collar tightens around his neck, strangling the wearer for a short amount of time. The PRC-316 has a hardness of 10, 10 wound points, and a break DC of 30. Failing a break check by more than 5 points inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the wearer. The collars also includes monitoring equipment that acts as a homing beacon, and alerts a security station if the unit has been deactivated.

Imperial prison guards do not carry collar remotes with them. Security personnel in other portions of the ship constantly monitor the collars, and can administer stunning jolts or unlock the collars as required.

Cartel Secureworks Repulsorfield Generator
Cost: 150 **Weight:** .4 kilograms
Availability: Rare **Era:** All

The CS repulsorfield generator is a manacle that is fitted to a prisoner's left ankle (or equivalent). The manacle creates a minor repulsorfield that prevents the wearer from flying or climbing more than 1 meter off the ground. The wearer can struggle against this, requiring a Strength check (DC 20, +1 per additional meter past the first; attempting to fly ten meters from the ground will impose a DC 29 Strength check). Failure indicates that the wearer is pulled back to within a meter of the ground.

An Escape Artist check (DC 30) is required to slip free of the manacle. The manacle has a hardness of 10, 5 wound points, and a break DC of 30. A Disable Device skill check can be made to disable the repulsorfield generator, but this check has a DC of 30. Prisoners with flying or climbing abilities are typically fitted with a repulsorfield generator manacle immediately upon being incarcerated.

Prison Ship Personnel

Imperial prison guards are taken from the ranks of what used to be the Republic Peace Officers, and receive special training in the handling of prisoners and captives. Lightly-armored and equipped with non-lethal weapons, they are expected to intimidate those in their charge in order to keep them under control. Failing that, non-lethal force can be used in self defense, though how much force used depends largely on the individual guard's demeanor and the extent of his patience.

Stun batons and Merr-Sonn deck-sweeping stun blasters (see the *Star Wars Arms and Equipment Guide*, page 17) are standard equipment. Each guard also carries a blaster pistol, and wears a shiny black blast vest over a dark gray uniform. Their statistics match those of low- and mid-level Republic Peace Officers (see the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* Revised Core Rulebook, page 351), but replace the Great Fortitude feat with Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster rifles).

Incorporating Ord Vaxal Into Your Campaign

Being a combination of secret Imperial penal colony and vile Huttese shadowport, Ord Vaxal can be introduced as a tantalizing mystery for your players to discover. Even the best-kept secrets beget rumors, and the penal colony of Ord Vaxal (or the Oubliette shadowport) should be no exception. Any of a number of options can be used in order to hook your players into investigating these rumors.

The most obvious way to incorporate Ord Vaxal into your game is to maroon your players there as prisoners. This allows them to explore this mysterious, primitive world on their own terms, to become embroiled in the conspiracies of Ord Vaxal's petty warlords, and to devise an escape plan should they learn of Oubliette. Players can begin such a scenario as residents who have been living in Tof Soren for years, as prisoners who have been recently sent there, or as a mixture of the two.

If the characters are members of the Rebel Alliance, they might be sent in search of important personnel or allies who have gone missing, or who have been arrested by the Empire. Clues point to a secret Imperial prison facility, which the players must discover and investigate if they are to rescue their comrades. Thousands of Rebel sympathizers and political dissidents have been stranded on Ord Vaxal since the Emperor resumed using it as a penal colony. This makes the world a valuable source of allies in the fight to free to the galaxy from Palpatine's tyranny.

From an Imperial perspective, Ord Vaxal is a facility with a legitimate, if draconian, purpose. PCs who are Imperial agents may be assigned to protect the colony's secrecy from rebel spies. They might also be tasked with seeking out evidence of Moff Reyn's corruption and the Oubliette shadowport, which could obviously lead to lots of tension and intrigue. They may very well find themselves abandoned on the planet by their own superiors if their investigations bear too much fruit. On a world where they are commonly seen as the oppressors, they would be hard-pressed to find any allies at all.

Independent player groups with ties to the Hutts might find themselves hauling cargo to and from Oubliette. The slave trade is a lucrative business, and the players may very well find themselves involved in a transaction that they hadn't anticipated. Characters in the employ of rival Hutts might be sent to expose Oubliette, undermining Sassallo's operation within the Vaxal system, or a group of bounty hunter PCs might be assigned to track down a target in hiding within the shadowport. ●

Starships of the Galaxy

Arakyd Industries *Trident*-Class Surveyor

Cartography and Text by Christopher West, Illustration by Jeff Carlisle

Freighters and fighters are among the most widely available vessels on the market, but they're rarely suited to the rigors of extended deep space travel and planetary exploration. In response to what it perceived as an unfilled niche in the interstellar marketplace, Arakyd Industries created a specialized exploration vessel capable of surveying planetary environments that other starships simply can't enter. Using specialized propulsion technologies "borrowed" from the Sedrians, Arakyd created the *Trident*-class Surveyor, a long-range reconnaissance vehicle outfitted with a remarkable assortment of technology for the most demanding exploration missions imaginable.

The *Trident* can withstand intense external pressures as well as it handles the vacuum of space. Alternate propulsion and sensor systems combine with innovative hull reinforcement to create a fully submersible starship design—the *Trident* can operate safely underwater to a depth of 10 kilometers.

All of this innovation comes at a price, of course—quite literally. Many of the ship's systems are composed of custom-built components and rare metals, and it even contains a number of devices that were barely out of the prototype stage during its inception at the height of the Galactic Empire. These factors come together to make the *Trident*-class Surveyor one of the most exorbitantly priced starships of its size in the galaxy.

STAR WARS
ROLEPLAYING GAME

Arakyd Industries *Trident*-Class Surveyor

Class: Space Transport
Size: Medium-Size (82.5 meters)
Crew: 7–10 (Skilled +4)
Hyperdrive: x75 (x10 backup)
Initiative: +4 (+4 crew)
Passengers: 3
Maneuver: +4 (+4 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 80 tons
Defense: +25 (+15 armor)
Consumables: 9 months
Shield Points: 100 (DR 20)
Cost: 1,475,000 (new), 950,000 (used)
Hull Points: 180 (DR 20)
Maximum Speed in Space: Attack (8 squares/action)
Atmospheric Speed: 800 km/h (13 squares/action)
Aquatic Speed: 200 km/k (3 squares/action)
Weapon: Double turbolaser cannon (1); **Fire Arc:** Turret; **Attack Bonus:** +8 (+0 size, +2 crew, +6 fire control); **Damage:** 5d10x2; Range Modifiers: +0/-2/-4/-6
Weapon: Concussion mine layer (12 mines); **Fire Arc:** Rear; **Attack Bonus:** +14 (+8 size, +6 guidance system); **Damage:** 8d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** Not applicable (mines do not move once set).

Compartment Key

1. **Cargo Bay:** The *Trident's* cargo bay is located in an overhanging section of the upper deck of the ship, with a floor hatch that descends hydraulically to serve as a large cargo-loading elevator. This same hatch can be opened underwater for the deployment and retrieval of aquatic probe droids or even a reasonably sized submersible vessel. The entire compartment is outfitted with powerful pressure controls and circulation pumps to prevent flooding—even at great depths—so the area effectively functions as a mobile diving pool and underwater airlock.
2. **Weapon Compartment:** This section of the ship mounts a suite of offensive and defensive tactical systems, including a twin-barreled turbolaser turret, deflector shield generator, and a concussion minelayer. A storage rack affixed to the ceiling feeds seismic charges (12 total) to the minelaying hatch on the far side of the ship, and a computer terminal allows all of the above systems to be operated from this compartment, even if the command deck is lost.
3. **Hidden Electronics Suite:** In addition to processing and storing complex sensor data, the systems mounted in this secret area interface directly with the ship's AI. The sophisticated droid intelligence of a *Trident* Surveyor has unfettered access to every ship system. Though programmed for outstanding loyalty to her crew (and bestowed with a fair measure of scientific curiosity), each *Trident's* brain is outfitted with a verbal "kill-switch" that allows her captain to instantly disable the AI in any sort of emergency, just by uttering a specific code phrase. The electronics compartment itself is concealed by hidden pressure doors designed to protect the AI and any valuable research data in case the ship is ever boarded by pirates or other unwelcome forces. It's also shielded against sensor scans (DC +10) and spacious enough that the entire crew can hide within, if necessary.
4. **Upper Deck Corridors:** These passages facilitate easy access to each of the ship's upper deck compartments. A pressure hatch in the floor of one corridor allows crewmembers to quickly reach area 7 without relying on the lift tube. The doorway to the electronics suite (area 3) is cleverly concealed by a computer-controlled sliding wall section (Search DC 20).
5. **Engineering Bay:** All of the vessel's power and propulsion systems are accessible here, including a pair of networked power cores to satisfy the ship's intense energy needs. A specialized computer terminal in one corner lets the ship's engineer monitor all of the *Trident's* vital systems from one station.
6. **Lift Tube:** The doorway into the sensor suite is concealed behind a sliding wall panel controlled by the ship's computer (Search DC 20).
7. **Lower Deck Corridor:** This "L"-shaped corridor connects most of the lower-deck compartments, with a ladder built into one wall for emergency access to the upper deck.
8. **Command Deck:** The command deck's unusual location on the underside of the ship protects the crew from enemy fire, which can often target the ship from a different vector. It also allows the crew to observe freight loading and, more importantly, probe retrieval operations. Finally, the unique vantage point allows the crew to directly survey the waters below when the vessel is exploring an undersea environment. In an extreme emergency, the entire command deck can detach from the rest of the hull to form a temporary lifeboat. Backup life support only lasts about 48 hours, which is plenty of time for the compartment to float to an ocean surface, but hardly sufficient for a crew stranded in deep space.
9. **Refresher.**
10. **Crew Quarters:** Three triple-level bunks provide accommodations for as many as nine crewmates, though the situation is far from comfortable under such circumstances. The compartment more commonly houses six individuals, with the top three bunks stowed in the ceiling to conserve space.
11. **Escape Pod:** Although the command deck can serve as a sort of detachable lifeboat, a *Trident*-class ship also features small one-seat escape pod with a week's worth of life support. Up to three adult humans can squeeze in, but the life support dwindles proportionately. If deployed underwater, the pod rises to the surface; atmospheric regulators shield the passengers against any pressure-related adversity.
12. **Mess Hall:** The mess deck serves the crew as meeting-place and social center. Storage compartments in the walls and ceiling contain a variety of culinary goods to make long journeys more tolerable.
13. **Crew Lounge:** The wall-mounted entertainment center here offers a great variety of distractions.
14. **Computer Lab:** Two technicians can share the terminals here, which are hard-wired into the central processors in area 3. These terminals provide a +5 circumstance bonus on skill checks related to scientific analysis.
15. **Medical Suite/Science Lab:** Four bacta tanks and three surgical beds effectively outfit the surveyor as a mobile hospital ship, but they're more often used for the study and preservation of biological materials taken from visited worlds. A pair of experimental stasis pods can be used to transport delicate biosamples or critically injured crewmembers. All Treat Injury skill checks made in this lab receive a +5 circumstance bonus due to the state-of-the-art facilities. The room also stores three medical kits, a dozen medpacs, and a surgery kit.
16. **Captain's Cabin:** A small but finely appointed room provides the ship's captain with a measure of privacy and quick access to the command deck.
17. **Airlock:** The *Trident's* airlock is protected by an angled section of hull plating which folds down to form a set of stairs to the hatch itself. An adjacent storage locker within the airlock contains several flight suits, breath masks, and glow rods for extravehicular activity, plus a tool kit and any weapons a crew may choose to store here. A built-in decontamination shower helps to protect the crew from alien pathogens and other environmental hazards.

KEY

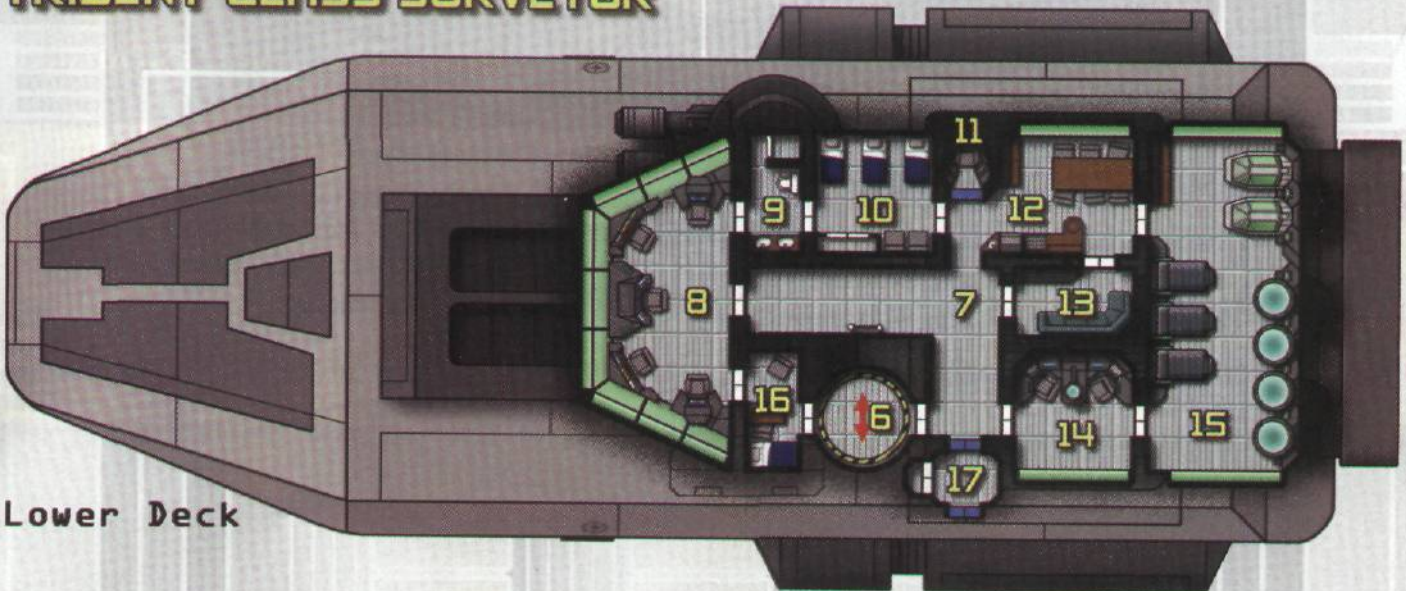
1 square = 2m

- Life Support System
- Bunks
- Surgical Bed
- Cargo Crate
- Cargo Door Hydraulics
- Seats
- Computer
- Stasis Pod
- Shield Generator
- Desk
- Binary Loadlifter
- Hatch, Airlock
- Hatch, Floor
- Hatch, Secure
- Hatch, Standard
- Bacta Tank
- Sublight Engine
- Refresher
- Lift Tube
- Ladder
- Lounge Seat
- Power Core
- Mess Hall Facilities
- Shelves
- Hyperdrive
- Table
- Turret Actuator
- Viewport

Upper Deck

ARAKYD INDUSTRIES

TRIDENT-CLASS SURVEYOR



Lower Deck